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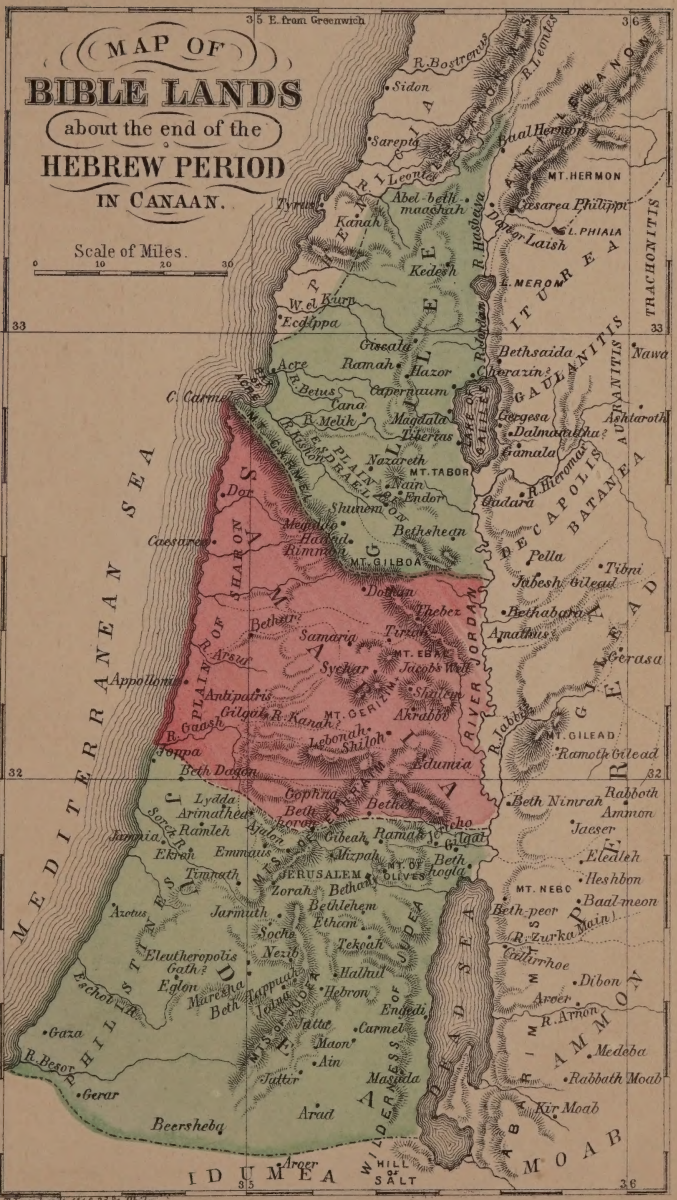

T. Leonhardt, 1145 S. 3rd St. Phila.

LIFE-SCENES

FROM THE

OLD TESTAMENT.

WITH MAPS AND ILLUSTRATIONS.

BY

REV. GEORGE JONES, M. A.,

Chaplain United States Navy,

AUTHOR OF "LIFE-SCENES FROM THE FOUR GOSPELS."

PHILADELPHIA:

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PREFACE.

THOSE old times of Abraham and Moses are dimmed by the mists of so many centuries, and are connected with such strange events, that they are apt to assume a myth-like appearance, and we find a difficulty in looking on them as real things. Especially has the glamour of our childish fancy in our early readings and hearings of Bible scenes, had an effect to distort them into unreal shapes; and our continuous subsequent reading has helped in giving permanency to those early impressions. The Scripture language is also different from that of other books, and helps to make us treat the subjects as if they did not belong to human life. And moreover, those Eastern scenes are all so different from ours, that a degree of indefiniteness must of necessity rest upon our apprehensions, unless we make an effort which most persons are not willing to undertake, in order to a full knowledge and a distinct impression respecting these persons and events.

Yet it is evident that the value of Bible teachings depends on our having a clear and full comprehension of what is contained in its sacred pages.

The object of the present work is to aid the reader in these respects: first, by offering such exhibitions of present Eastern tent-life as may help to make him understand the peculiar habits, modes of thinking and rules of conduct among those ancient dwellers in tents; secondly, by presenting the Israelite patriarchs as they really were,—men with our instincts, and reasoning powers, and feelings,—mortals, with our earthly

stamp except so far as they were brought into immediate communings with the Deity; and yet even in that, never losing their human nature and their distinct individualities: thirdly, by trying to make the Scripture scenes full, by means of the knowledge which libraries and travellers place within our reach, and to make them vivid and present to the reader's imagination,—in short, as far as circumstances will admit, to make them stand out as life-scenes before him.

With regard to the second item in this effort, the writer while at his work met with a paper in the London Quarterly of Oct., 1859, so appropriate and forcible that he takes the liberty of making an extract:

"Here again our aim should be to realize the men as they were. We lose instruction, unless we appreciate the human element in scriptural characters, while we are careful not to forget what is divine in the direction and record of their lives. The more we feel them to be men like ourselves, the more we learn from their actions and their sufferings. Biographical principles ought to be fearlessly applied in the Holy History, just as we cannot make ourselves acquainted with the Holy Land, except after close geographical inquiry. The haze of unreality is in both cases alike undesirable. Nor are the religious lessons of the Old Testament in any degree impaired, because the men of whom we read were homely in the circumstances of their lives, rude in their civilization, and strangely like other men in their motives and conduct. The smallness of the life does not detract from the greatness of the promise, but rather enhances our sense of the superintendence which conducted every step of their history onward toward its conclusion; just as the smallness of the land involves no dishonor, but invites our attention all the more pointedly to its glorious destinies."

In filling up those remote Bible scenes, and in his effort to make them vivid and life-like to the reader, the author has made use of the well-known laws in human feeling and conduct, by which we know that certain things being given, certain results will follow: but in doing this, and in letting his imagination have that exercise which the case required, he has felt also the danger in such use of this faculty and has endeavored to keep it within the proper bounds. Anything like making a romance out of Scripture incidents is to be entirely deprecated: and all attempts at sketching Bible scenes should be in most careful subservience to the revelations in the Word of God. Josephus has in this respect committed an error, by following the Latin historical authors in his day, and putting speeches into the mouths of persons introduced in his writings, which he had no authority for doing. The writer of the present book has carefully avoided everything of that nature, and he has, he believes, made all his work in entire reverence for the Scriptures themselves. He has also avoided the course of some excellent biblical scholars, who have shown an unwillingness fully to admit miraculous action when the effect might be produced by unusual operation of natural causes. The full actuality of miracles is everywhere acknowledged in this book, with an argument also that what we call natural laws are only a uniform mode of action by the Deity for men's good, and can as easily be departed from by Him when there is sufficient cause.

With such a proper reverence for Scripture, *picturing*, both in Sunday-school and in the pulpit, may be made the vehicle of good results. In a notice of a former work of the author, by the "Sunday-School Teacher," of Chicago, it is remarked, "Picture teaching is always delightful, if at all well managed. It is *the* method for a Sunday-school teacher." To this may be

added, that there is often no method for impressing a truth from the pulpit, and for making it permanent, so effective as to attach it to some vividly-sketched Scriptural scene with which it is connected. The writer of this has listened to some of the best preachers of his day, and although the discourses have been powerful and convincing, they have often left no prominent idea, and nothing enduring except the general effect. In other cases, a sketched Bible scene has attached both itself and its connected truth, to the mind; and not only this, but the memory has taken continued pleasure in reverting to both.

It was the intention, when this book was commenced, to make it embrace all the most prominent incidents of the Old Testament, from Abraham to Daniel, both inclusive; but the author soon discovered that this would be impossible without such a degree of compression as would counteract the design of the work; and indeed, he found the parts here introduced so extremely rich in facts and so full of the picturesque in incident, that his pen, unconsciously to himself, lingered among them till he was at last able to go only half-way toward the accomplishment of his original purpose. The striking parallelism between the peculiar Scripture incidents and the idiosyncrasies of the different Pharaohs reigning during the Israelite period in Egypt, illustrative of the latter, is deserving of yet further attention, and it is hoped that scholars will pursue the subject beyond what could be done in the limits of this book. The affirmative testimony from the monuments as it is here exhibited, drawn from the writings of the two great German Egyptologists, is the more valuable because those writers have the peculiar German views of Scripture incidents.

The author cannot withhold here the expression of his gratification at the success of a former work like the present entitled, "Life-scenes from the Four Gospels," and at the testimony of

its usefulness given by persons of all classes and from every part of the country. After a very careful preparation of the present work, he submitted it to the examination of his valued young friend, Mr. I. Newton Baker; and to the critical acumen of that gentleman the book is indebted for much of the accuracy and neatness in its present appearance.

GEORGE JONES.

UNITED STATES NAVAL ASYLUM,
PHILADELPHIA, *July 8th*, 1868.

In addition to the notice of authorities in the foot-notes, the following titles are given more in detail,—the Bible being always the chief authority:

Bunsen: "Egypt's Place in Universal History," by Christian Karl Josias Bunsen, Chevalier, D. Ph. and D. C. L.

Lepsius: "Denkmaeler aus Egypten und Aethiopien," etc., 1842–1845, von C. R. Lepsius, 13 vols., royal folio.

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Porter: "Five Years in Damascus," by Rev. J. L. Porter, A. M., F. L. S.

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Burckhardt: "Travels in Syria and the Holy Land," by John Lewis Burckhardt, F. G. S.

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LIFE-SCENES.

CHAPTER I.

IN SOUTHERN CANAAN.

WE desire to carry the reader to a period dating back about thirty-eight hundred years. This seems to be a long time, but length of time depends on the measurements which we apply to it. A day is sometimes long in the life of an individual, or a year may be short in the same life: a century is but a fragment in the life of a nation: the age of our world, as geologists estimate it, is beyond the power of the imagination to grasp; and yet, compared with eternity, what is it? The mind cannot conceive of its infinite shortness of duration, in such a comparison.

This present book is to treat of acts and purposes in the government of God, before whom all other vastness shrinks into insignificance, and time itself is scarcely an item of calculation; for with him one day is "as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." He was, at the period now spoken of, about to bring into decisive operation a series of events designed to reach, with infinite results, to our day, and through eternity.

About thirty-eight hundred years ago, an aged man stood before his tent in an Eastern country, at eventide, and looked abroad over a scene adapted to bring feelings of very great satisfaction to his heart. For he was the chief

of a pastoral tribe, and the plain on which he stood was covered with his flocks and herds, now coming home to be watered, after having fed through the day upon the rich adjoining pastures. A calm and very beautiful picture it was—there was such a significance of comfort and enjoyment around; and the mellowness of evening was now on every object, and also in every heart. For, while eventide has its charms everywhere, they are peculiarly great in that Eastern region, and in such open space, where the sun, as it approaches the horizon, lights up all nature with its own greatness of splendor, not dazzling or scorching, but in its mild glory enriching and beautifying every object, and turning the air itself into a glowing, ruby light.

But in this picture, the aged chief himself formed the most striking and interesting object, as he stood there erect, active still, though more than one hundred and twenty years old, and with a face in which authority and dignity were blended with greatest gentleness and kindness. He was looked up to with reverence by all, and he deserved their reverence. In those times men were strong in very advanced age; for the human constitution had not yet been weakened by indulgences continued from generation to generation and by the hereditary vexations of the world; and in addition to this, the nomadic life is adapted to bring into activity the healthier influences on body and mind. People in such employment have a feeling of suffocation in cities, and can breathe freely only in the tent or under the open sky, and their health has the hardy, vigorous cast which such circumstances must produce: they walk erect in the desert with an elastic step, and a sense of openness and freedom which tinctures all their lives. Travellers to the East picture to us the Arab sheikh as a very model of dignity without stiffness, and of polished urbanity without a consciousness of its own action; and even the children of his household soon catch the manners of their seniors in both these

respects. The person at whom we are now looking, before the tent in Southern Canaan, was the progenitor of many nations, and, among them, of all the Arab tribes; and we may well picture him as having these admirable characteristics of the Arab sheikh.

The country amid which his tent now stood had no great beauty, except that which is dearest to a pastoral people, namely, a large extent for grazing purposes and a sufficiency of water, without danger of intrusive neighbors coming to meddle with their herds. It was a region of gentle undulations, showing only in the far distant north anything that could be called the outlines of mountains; and on the east and west some lower ranges just sufficient to give variety to the landscape; while, toward the south, the eye wandered over an unbroken, level extent of grass-covered land, with scarcely a shrub to break its uniformity. But the spectator knew that, in this last direction, there would soon succeed a dreary, barren waste, extending on for more than a hundred miles. That barrenness kept this tribe of nomads free from neighbors in that direction, as did also similar barrenness, though to a less degree, on the east. Therefore it was a somewhat isolated region, and in very many respects all the more valuable on that account. A broad, shallow depression in the ground (now called *Wady*[1] *es Seba*), coming down from the northward and eastward, and passing off thence westwardly, gave to this region a transit for its waters to the Mediterranean in the season of rains, but in summer it was dry. On its sides, at the spot we are speaking of, wells had been dug, which, from a circumstance to be noticed hereafter, gave to the place the name of *Beersheba, the Well of the Oath.*

[1] The word *wady* is one so significant and convenient that it will often be employed in this book. It means any depression in the ground sufficient to form a water-course when one is needed, and may mean, as here, a shallow, wide depression, or also a valley, or even glen.

This region, to a traveller coming from the desert south of it, breaks upon the eye with a charming effect, especially in the spring season, when it is usually covered over with flowers of brilliant dyes springing up among the rich herbage; the whole landscape being the more striking from contrast with the barrenness and the dreariness of nature among which he has been so long time journeying. That very accurate observer, Dr. Robinson, describes his approach to Beersheba in a manner which will give us a very good idea of the place and of the approach to it from the south. He had been travelling for many days over the desert, where the only variety to its monotonous wastes was an occasional mirage, taunting the travellers with the appearance of lakes and herbage which disappeared as they advanced. At length, on April 10th, they came to some shrubs and vegetation in a basin where a thin, meagre grass was springing up in various places. "Such spots as these," he remarks, "we had not seen or heard of since passing Wady Ghurundel on the Gulf of Suez." As they now advanced, the country around became gradually more open, with broad valleys separated by low, swelling hills. Grass increased in the valleys, and herbs were sprinkled over the hills. "We heard this morning, for the first time, the songs of many birds, and among them the lark." Of their journey on the 11th he says: "Our path now led over a hill and down another small valley running nearly E.N.E. toward a wide and open country, which spread itself out on every side with swelling hills, but no mountains as far as the eye can reach. Herbs were abundant, but the scanty grass was withered and parched" [the season was unusually dry]. Proceeding, "we halted at a fine well, surrounded with several drinking troughs of stone for watering camels and flocks. The well is circular, eight or ten feet in diameter, and twenty-seven to the surface of the water." Leaving this, "our path led for a time over sandy hills sprinkled with herbs and

shrubs, but with little grass." "As we advanced [April 12th] the loose sand ceased, and the country exhibited more grass mingled with herbs. Our road thus far had been among swelling hills of moderate height. We now began to ascend others, higher but of the same general character. The herbs of the desert began to disappear, and the hills were thickly covered with grass, now dry and parched. The ascent was long and gradual. We reached the top at a quarter past one, and looked out before us over a broad, level tract, beyond which our eyes were greeted with the first sight of the mountains of Judah, south of Hebron, which skirted the open country and bounded the horizon in the east and northeast. We felt that the desert was at an end. Descending gradually, we came at two o'clock upon an open, undulating country; the shrubs ceased, or nearly so; green grass was seen along the lesser water-courses, and almost green sward, while the gentle hills, covered in ordinary seasons with grass and green pastures, were now burnt over with drought. Arabs were pasturing their cattle in various parts, but no trace of dwellings was to be seen. At a quarter to three o'clock we reached *Wady es Seba*, a wide water-course or bed of a torrent running here W.S.W. toward Wady es Suny. Upon its northern side, close upon the bank, are two deep wells, still called *Bir-es-Seba*, the ancient Beersheba. We had entered the borders of Palestine!

"The wells are some distance apart; are circular, and stoned up very neatly with solid masonry, apparently much more ancient than the wells at Abdeh [just passed]. The larger one is twelve and a half feet in diameter, and forty-four and a half to the surface of the water, sixteen of which at the bottom are excavated in the solid rock. The other well lies fifty-five rods W. S. W., and is fifteen feet in diameter and forty-two feet deep. The water in both is pure and sweet, and in great abundance; the finest indeed we had seen since

leaving Sinai. Both wells are surrounded with drinking troughs of stone for camels and flocks. The curbstones were deeply worn by the attrition of ropes."

Van de Velde saw this region in a more favorable season, and he wrote, "Nothing has so much surprised me as the lovely herbage with which this extensive, undulating, sandy plain is clothed [April 1st]. Sand is not now to be seen at all; all is grass and flowers. . . . . At 9 A. M. we reached the wells of Beersheba. They are five in number, narrow at the opening, and deep. They form, as it were, a group of wells in a shallow dry bed of a stream."

On an evening such as we have described, in those ancient times, the aged chief of the tribe then occupying this region gazed over this scene of plain and hill, where his numerous retainers were bringing in the herds to the wells for refreshment and for the protecting night-shelter at home. There was an outspoken joyousness in these attendants; for, as we shall soon observe, the nomads have their own peculiar times of mirth, have their songs and their poets gifted with the power of impromptu effusions, their musical instruments and performers, their treasures of unwritten history and genealogies, their thrilling stories of present adventure or of love, and their peculiar sensibilities to love itself;—all which, as they come in from their solitary, scattered employments through the day, make a double enjoyment in these evening gatherings at the tents, or in the congregated movements incident to their changes of camping-place. So this evening, as they came from far and near, the shouts of herdsmen and their song, the sounds of musical pipes and laughter and gaiety, the lowing of herds and the bleating of flocks, all mingled in a pleasant harmony and suited well the scene, where nature in its sky, now changing to amethystine hues, and its sun tipping all objects with a mild glory, and its welcomings to approaching rest, seemed itself to have a gentle, quiet joy.

But the merriment among these thickening groups had a somewhat subdued, although not on that account a less pleasing, cast, when they saw the figure of their chief; and, if in some it was quite hushed, it gave way to a more pleasurable, because more affectionate, sentiment. For all loved the aged patriarch. His character was indeed a very peculiar one, and well adapted to produce great respect and affection, and also a feeling deepening into veneration. They knew him to be brave and skilful in battle; for, although mostly a man of peace and quiet, even to the sacrifice of his own interests, he had on one occasion armed them and led them to war for the relief of friends and neighbors carried off for slavery, and had defeated the enemy superior in numbers and put them to flight; and he had afterward refused any requital to himself. His hospitality was always free and large, and his tribe felt that they were honored by it. He was manly, simple, affectionate in disposition, and had a religious sentiment pervading his feelings and actions in a very remarkable degree. This latter, indeed, was so strong a characteristic, that his adherents would have looked upon him with awe approaching to fear, if there had not been with it a gentleness and manliness which drew all to him, and blended with their reverential regard a feeling also of deep affection and attachment.

His history, as communicated to them, was a peculiar one. He was from a distant region, and, they were told, had come hither by divine command. He was also said now to have communications with the Deity, whether by voice or dreams is not known; but he believed in them, so far as to make them the rule of his life. For this reason he had come from his own country, and he was called now "The Hebrew,"[1] perhaps from *Heber*, "to cross over," in consequence of his

[1] Gen. xiv. 13. In the Septuagint, this passage reads Abram περάτης, "Abram who came over."

having come from beyond the great river, the Euphrates. So he was an exotic in his present residence; and his belief in the truth of the divine command was shown by his planting himself here among strangers, led as he said by that Superior Will made manifest to him. People listened and wondered; and even the idolatrous rulers of the country, with whom he came in contact, impressed by his sincerity of belief and by his strong points of character, treated him with great respect.

On this evening, however, while the vast, busy life invited on every side the chief's gratified regard, these were yet constantly attracted from the moving panorama toward his son,—we might almost say his only son, for another one, older, had been banished from his home. And this son, standing now near the tent, was one who might well engross a father's attention and love. The young man—for although twenty-five years old,[1] he was in those days considered almost a youth—had in himself no very strong traits of character, certainly nothing corresponding to the greatness of the father; but a mysterious greatness connected with the supernatural belonged to him and his future; and the father's eye, while seemingly resting on the youth, saw through him, far onward in time, a wonderful glory, compared with which all this brilliant radiance now filling the evening air was but the veriest dimness itself.

The father of whom we have been speaking was the patriarch Abraham; and the son was Isaac. An older son, Ishmael, was a wanderer, sent off from home in consequence of female jealousy within the tent by which the old man was standing. The spectacle which we have just been contemplating—the father and Isaac—is one which we may very well stop to gaze at, and before which all other objects in that landscape lose their comparative interest. Was Abraham

[1] On authority of Josephus, Antiq. I. 13 § 2.

led by Jehovah's direct hand? was he brought from the Euphrates actually by the divine voice? was he now, somehow or other, in direct communication with Jehovah? Did a glory of that kind shine through Isaac? Were all these things dreams, fancies, things of a heated imagination in the father, and told falsely about the son? and were they all to fade away with the individuals themselves?

Nay, we cannot believe it. For we in our day, so distant from theirs, have only to look at the Jewish people among us and at our own religious institutions, to see the demonstrations before our eyes—facts tangible by our outward senses—of an amazing power of some kind or other then concentrated on those two individuals, and of which they were to be the medium for centuries to come, if not for eternity itself. The strongest unbeliever must acknowledge this much; the believer feels and knows the influence of that power in himself. What histories of the world, facts, strange, great, life-giving, death-giving facts and histories, have come from those two individuals, whom we have just been contemplating on that plain of Beersheba!

Therefore what can be known and told of them, and of things consequent on them, must be the greatest of all histories. So it actually is, as told in the Bible. So it should be to us.

We are now trying, here, to clothe that long past with fullness, and to give it, as far as may be, the freshness and vividness of the present. We look at that scene, the two men in front, the wife of Abraham sitting by the tent-opening, and probably gazing also at the son; and we will make them, for a while, the central point in our first efforts at resuscitating those long-buried things.

CHAPTER II.

TENT-LIFE IN THE EAST.

Tent of an Arab Sheikh.
(*Copied from Layard.*)

A LARGE portion of the scenes to be brought forward in this book will be connected with nomads, people moving about with flocks, and whose life is in tents. It is a very peculiar life, and the incidents to be introduced are tinged by those peculiarities. Consequently it will be well to study that mode of living; and while we shall find the materials for such study to be ample, the subject will also have the charm of novelty, so different are the scenes it presents from those to which we are accustomed in our own condition of society.

The nomadic life at the present day appears not to differ from what it was in the very ancient times. Travellers through such countries tell us that, in what they see, they are continually carried back to the days of the patriarchs; and the scenes which they depict seem indeed to be often only a transcript of what comes before us incidentally in

the Bible. From the present we are able to learn therefore, without difficulty, respecting the past; and the tent-life to be now presented to the reader may probably be considered as photographing to us pretty accurately the tent-life of thirty-eight hundred years ago.

Indeed, in such a condition of society there can be little motive and little room for change. Each tribe of people stands by itself, isolated and sufficient in itself. Wants are very few in number; life is as simple as possible, and from the necessities of the case can never be complicated. What reason is there for change? Indeed, there can be no change where every one is compelled at the outset to reduce his necessities to the smallest possible amount, and has so to keep them, and where any multiplication of wants must only be a multiplication of constant embarrassments. The whole household must be such as to be easily moved, and the removals are so frequent that only the simplest items of domestic use can be retained. All is simple, plain, to our eyes often meagre; and yet there is, with this simplicity of life among these people, a stateliness of manner as well as courtesy, and often a dignity, which command our respect as well as win our admiration to a degree which no luxurious appliances of gorgeous palaces could do.

There is in the nomad a sense of unbounded freedom which gives its impress to all his bearing and to every feeling and thought. Mr. Porter, author of "Five Years in Damascus," says, "It is only within the bounds of his own undisputed domain that the Bedawy[1] can be seen to advantage. In a city he is like a caged bird. His countenance is uneasy and restless, his gait constrained, and his whole mien betrays anxiety. When not engaged in business, he generally squats in some quiet corner of a khan or street, peer-

[1] *Bedawy*, singular; plural *Bedawîn*. This is the more correct way of spelling these words (instead of Bedouin and Bedouins), and will be used in the original matter in this book.

ing from beneath the ample folds of his kefîyeh[1] at the busy crowd around him. But he is a different being when he breathes the desert air; his eye dilates, his spare, wiry frame becomes erect and commanding, and his step is firm and free." That writer had engaged for an intended visit to Palmyra, the protection of 'Amer, the sheikh of the great Bedawy tribe of the 'Anezy, whose pasture-grounds were in that direction, and he thus describes him: "He was a man of middle stature and seemingly of middle age. His frame was spare but wiry. There was no evidence of strength, but there was evidence of capability to endure great fatigue. His eye was quick, with more of shrewdness than fierceness in its glance. The whole expression of his countenance was mild and soft, and in this respect different from that of the generality of his race." A part of the journey, just after they had reached the desert, is thus described: "With silent footfall and sweeping step and ship-like motion, our dromedaries sped onward. There was no path to follow, and no barrier reared by nature or human hand to retard or turn them aside. Their course was direct and regular as if guided by compass. Often did I scan the country around in the vain endeavor to descry some solitary wanderer, or even some animal, on this dreary waste. None could be seen. About the hour of afternoon prayers, 'Amer, who had for some time ridden in silence with Mohammed the Ageily behind him, pulled off his heavy boots and Arab cloak and thrust them into his capacious saddle-bags. Thus disencumbered, he leaped lightly from the dromedary and

[1] *Kefiyeh* is a handkerchief, usually of brilliant colors, doubled and thrown over the head, so that the long points fall down on each side of the face. Usually it is kept in its place by a fillet of wool around the head.

The *abeih* is a square-shaped cloak, generally made of goat's hair or fine wool, but sometimes of the richest silk, interwoven with gold and silver, and embroidered on the shoulders. It is universally worn by the Bedawîn, and very generally by the inhabitants of villages bordering on the desert. Many of the desert tribes have a peculiar pattern for the cloth. See Porter.

ran at a quick pace to an eminence a little on the right. He now looked a new man; the transformation was truly wonderful. In the city he appeared like one over whose head near sixty summers had passed, leaving their impress in form and face. But now, in the desert, his form was erect and his step elastic, and his eye bright as a youth of twenty. His picturesque costume, too, added to the juvenile appearance. His brilliant silk robe of alternate stripes of red and white descended in graceful folds to the middle of his leg; it was confined at the waist by a girdle of red morocco leather, round the front of which were little brass tubes for cartridges. The sleeves of the robe were wide and open to the elbow, and from beneath them hung down those of his shirt, long and pennon-like, so that as he walked the points swept the ground. His silk kefîyeh was of the most brilliant colors, and had a fringe of plaited cord more than a foot in depth. His finely-formed feet and limbs were naked. Such was 'Amer as he now lightly and joyfully trod the desert soil; and such is the ordinary undress of the Bedawy sheikhs. Those however, who are of the ruling family in a tribe, wear over this a short cloak of scarlet cloth, faced and trimmed with black."

Some further extracts will be interesting, as showing the resemblances between the present and the very ancient tent-life of the East. Having proceeded for several hours, they saw at a great distance some specks on the landscape, which gradually developed themselves; and,

"At four o'clock we were in the midst of great herds of camels scattered over plain and mountain for many miles on every side, and soon after, overtopping an eminence, we saw before us black tents almost innumerable. We met an Arab wandering among the flocks; but he passed close to us without a salutation, and almost without a look at us. Some time after another passed near us, to whom 'Amer addressed a single question, receiving a brief answer. I gave him the

usual salutation of strangers in the desert (*el-'awâfy*, 'safety, or peace, from God'); he started as if surprised, gave me a quick, fierce look, but deigned no reply. This seemed no very pleasant introduction to Arab life. It took me quite by surprise; it was so different from the polite salutations of the peasantry, and from my anticipations of the boasted hospitality of the Bedawîn. I began to have some gloomy forebodings that all might not be right. I did not then know, what I afterward learned, that this is Arab etiquette —in fact, the very essence of politeness. When strange Arabs approach an encampment in the desert they wrap their cloaks carefully around them, and almost completely conceal their faces in the ample folds of their kefîyehs. No word of salutation is addressed to them, and no question asked on either side. They guide their animals in silence to any tent they choose to select, being careful, however, not to pass close to any other, as it would be considered an insult not to claim the hospitality of the first; they dismount without a word at the tent-door, and from that moment become the guests and *protegés* of its owner. The reasons and wisdom of this rather singular custom become at once apparent from a consideration of Arab life. Blood feuds are of frequent occurrence among desert tribes, and there are few families but are somewhere involved in them. When a stranger approaches an encampment, therefore, he knows not but that he may meet an enemy, and he consequently conceals his features till he reaches a place of safety. The duties of hospitality, too, are held so sacred, that no tribe or individual will salute or question an unknown stranger who claims it, lest they should discover in him one with whom they may have a blood feud. Once the stranger is within the precincts of a tent, his host is not only bound to supply his wants, but to defend him with his life.

"We dismounted at the door of a spacious tent in the centre of the encampment. No sooner had our sheikh

touched the ground than he was affectionately embraced by his son, a fine boy of about fifteen. This scene at once brought to my mind some incidents recorded in Scripture, and seemed, in fact, to realize the interesting narratives of patriarchal times. The youth placed his hands on his father's neck, and kissed each cheek, and then they leaned their heads for a few seconds, while embracing, on each other's shoulders. Precisely similar was the scene at the meeting of Jacob and Esau, nearly four thousand years ago: 'And Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him.' We were soon surrounded by a little group of wild-looking Arabs, who manifested intense curiosity at our every movement. Our luggage was placed within the tent, and comfortable seats prepared by the hands of 'Amer himself, who now cordially welcomed us to his desert home. The whole scene and circumstances were to us intensely interesting. The numerous tents grouped together on the parched desert soil, the widespreading flocks and herds browsing peacefully on every side, and the picturesque and primitive costumes of those who tended or wandered forth among them, pictured vividly before our minds the days when Abraham dwelt in tents and Jacob led his family and flocks across this same desert to the land of promise. The tents are unquestionably the same as those used in the most remote ages, for nothing can be imagined more simple than their construction. An oblong piece of black goat's-hair cloth is fastened to the ground by ropes and stakes at each end and along one side; several poles, some seven or eight feet long, placed upon their ends, keep it at the proper elevation, and leave one side entirely open—such is the whole fabric. The Bedawîn never call it a tent; its invariable name with them is *house of hair*.

"'Amer having borrowed my knife, went to a neighboring tent occupied by his harêm and younger children, to make ready, as we afterward found, the feast for his guests. A

lamb was speedily brought by a young man from the flock, and slain at the tent-door, and the still quivering limbs were handed over to his wife to be got ready. . . . .

"At a signal from the other tent great bustle and activity was manifested by the group before us. All rose up, and elderly men, approaching from various quarters, saluted us respectfully. 'Amer, his son, and Mohammed appeared among them, and were soon followed by three Arabs bearing between them a monstrous dish, nearly four feet in diameter, on which was a large pile of rice, with the members of a sheep scattered round the sides, and a large crater-like cavity in the summit filled with melted butter. This was placed as near us as the fire would permit, and resembled, when on the ground, a volcano in miniature. We were invited to approach and commence the banquet; and several elders of the tribe, with Mohammed, after much pressing, were persuaded to sit down with us. Our host sat at a respectful distance; his son and two or three smaller children close beside him. It is Arab etiquette for the host to be served last of all. . . . .

"When we had withdrawn with those who had joined us, another relay sat down; and these were followed by another, until the mountain became a valley of dry bones. It was only when all had eaten and were satisfied, that 'Amer and his son approached and gathered up the fragments. Poor fellows! their fare was but scanty. . . . .

"As the evening advanced the circle of our visitors enlarged. The fitful blaze but half revealed the wild figures that squatted round, and dimly showed the beautifully formed heads and soft eyes of two or three mares that gazed familiarly on the assembly, and the faint outline of the huge camels picketed in the background. We were entertained with wild tales of Arab life and warfare, of bold forays and fierce reprisals, and of the wondrous speed and endurance of matchless and priceless mares, whose unbroken genealo-

gies and untold perfections the whole tribe were proud of. We were eagerly questioned too about our own far distant land. . . . .

"A bed on the hard, stony, desert soil tends to promote early rising; and for once at least I was thankful for it. The whole encampment, extending far away on every side, as viewed in the gray morning light, was one vast forest of camels with a dense underwood of sheep and goats. Presently they began to waver, and the whole was soon in motion. The smaller animals assembled in groups, obedient to the call of their masters, and then followed them far away in the distance. Thus disappeared flock after flock, each knowing and following its own shepherd. Occasionally the vast masses mingled, and for a few moments united; but this caused no confusion, for 'a stranger will they not follow: they know not the voice of a stranger.' The Arab maids, in their graceful flowing robes, each a model for a statuary, now went forth from their tents to milk the sheep and camels, and returned again with the foam-crowned pails upon their heads. It was a purely pastoral and truly patriarchal scene, and well repaid us for our early start."

Their way then led them by other pasture-grounds and encampments, where it was difficult to avoid the Arab hospitality, and on the following day,

"At 1.45, as we were passing a large tent in the outskirts of an encampment, a friendly voice suddenly cried, 'Ya 'Amer! Ya 'Amer! Hauwel! Hauwel!' ('O Amer, O Amer, stop! stop!') and in a moment more our chief was in the arms of an aged Arab, who embraced and kissed him most lovingly. Another and another came up and went through the same ceremony. It was quite impossible to resist the importunities of these hospitable men. We *must* dismount, sheep must be slain, princely banquets must be prepared in honor of the arrival of 'Amer and the illustrious strangers. Our dromedaries were seized and pulled to the

ground, and we were all but dragged from their backs and transported *per force* into the interior of the tent. Long and loud did we remonstrate. We had expected to reach Palmyra in the evening, and this besides was no pleasant place for us to spend the afternoon. It was in vain, however, and so, when we could do nothing else, we quietly sat down on our carpets to await the will of our masters.

"We were scarcely seated when we observed a young man bind on his sandals, and set off at speed across the plain. In half an hour he returned bearing a lamb on his shoulders. The poor animal was soon stretched upon the ground, bleeding and in the agonies of death. Stripped of its skin with Arab despatch, the yet quivering body was handed over to the tenants of the harêm.

"The whole of this scene, however inconvenient under present circumstances, was regarded by both Mr. Robson and myself with deep interest. It seemed as if we had been carried back more than three thousand years in the world's history, and by some mysterious providence permitted to mingle with the people of patriarchal times. The salutations we heard around us and those addressed to ourselves were such as had been familiar to us from childhood in the stories of Abraham and the angels on the plains of Mamre, and of Jacob and Laban at Padan-Aram. Here was the aged sheikh sitting in his tent-door watching for chance wayfarers; here was the generous hospitality that would constrain us to remain until we partook of refreshments; here too were the widespreading flocks from which the lamb was brought, and the almost inconceivable expedition with which it was killed and served up with *butter and milk*.[1] The solemn interview between Abraham and

[1] The Arab butter is made in the usual way, by churning the milk. The process of churning is somewhat singular. A skin of milk is tied up to a tent-pole and shaken by a woman until the butter separates. When *fresh*, the butter is tolerable; but when it has stood some time, the taste,

the angels was now pictured on our minds in far more brilliant colors than it had ever been before. [See Gen. xviii. 1–8.]

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"I have often heard it said that the Arab women are generally plain in features. I cannot by any means agree with this statement. I have now seen many of them in different places, and in general I have found their features regular, and even handsome. Their bodies are finely proportioned, and their carriage and walk graceful and easy. All of them have that rich, black, lustrous eye that is only seen in perfection in the East. The forehead is open and high, and the eyebrows beautifully arched. The mouth is well formed, with proudly curved lines; but this feature is universally disfigured by the custom of staining the under lip dark blue. The braided hair is almost quite covered by a black veil that hangs gracefully over the shoulders, the corner of which is frequently brought forward to cover the lower part of the face. The whole dress consists of a long, loose blue robe of coarse calico. It is drawn closely round the throat, has wide hanging sleeves, and sweeps the ground like a train when they walk. A profusion of bracelets of gold or silver adorn the arms, and large rings and drops hang from the ears; but only a few of them wear the nose-jewel. This simple costume is admirably adapted to display the symmetry of their form and gracefulness of their movements; it causes no restraint or stiffness, but allowing full play to nature, leaves all the beautiful proportions of the body to be fully developed. The gay votaries of fashion in the more polished nations of the West might imitate to some

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and even the smell of the skin, comes out rather strong. Milk is of two kinds: fresh, called *halîb;* and curdled, called *leben.* The latter is a common kind of refreshment. It is evidently the חמאה *hemah* which Abraham gave to the angels, and which Jael gave to Sisera (Judges v. 25).

extent, and with great advantage, the simple attire of these daughters of the desert."

To these examples of Arab hospitality may be properly added another experienced by Mr. Porter in a visit to that most interesting region lying to the southward from Damascus—the Haurán, the Bashan of early times. He was now among the Druzes, who live in the ancient stone houses of that country, but yet take many of their characteristics from the dwellers in tents. In his journey he came to Hît,[1] on arriving at which they were taken immediately to the house of Sheikh Ass'ad 'Amer; and he says,

"Next to bravery in battle, to be reckoned hospitable is the proudest distinction an Arab chief can obtain. A plentiful repast of honey, *dibs*,[2] butter and various kinds of sweetmeats was served up soon after our entrance, and at sunset a feast was prepared for us which far surpassed anything of the kind I had before seen. A whole sheep, roasted and stuffed with rice, graced the centre; beside it was a huge dish of *pillau*,[3] some three feet in diameter. Round these were ranged nearly twenty other dishes of various kinds of dainties, including fowls, soups, *kibbeh*, *burghul* and a host of others. Round these again were ranged the thin cakes of bread in little piles, on the top of each of which was placed a wooden spoon, the only instrument used in this primitive land in taking food, and even this is a recent importation. All the dishes were of copper tinned, and they were placed on a large circular mat in the middle of the floor. The guests squatted round the dainties, each one stretching forward hand or spoon and helping himself to whatever he preferred. We were first invited to dine, and having finished, the other guests with the servants advanced. Then a portion was set aside on a separate mat for the sheikh; and

[1] See map in Chapter xlviii.

[2] Wine boiled down to a jelly-like consistency.

[3] Rice, with a lake of butter on its centre.

members of his household, retainers, and such of the villagers as were present, afterward fell on the remainder. Before this third relay the pyramid of rice soon disappeared; the bones of sheep and fowls were stripped of every vestige of flesh; and the soup, burghul and pillau were thrown into one huge dish and speedily devoured.

"But enough of a Druze feast. Even so much I would not have inflicted on my reader but that it serves to show the primitive state of society in this country, and that in this ancient kingdom of Bashan the lapse of three thousand years has effected but little change in manners and customs. The hospitality of former days still remains; strangers could not then pass the house or tent of the patriarch without being constrained to go in and take food; and so it is even now. The wonderful expedition in the preparation of food, when the lamb or kid or fatted calf was brought and killed, and the bread was kneeded and baked, and the dainties thus hastily prepared were set before the stranger,—all this is illustrated here, at the present time, and in the ordinary incidents of every-day life. It seemed to me, as I wandered among these hills of Bashan, as if time had retrograded many long centuries. The strange stories I used to read in boyhood beside a mother's knee, in that ponderous old Bible, were now realized. *These* surely are the tents of Abraham; or *these* are the dwellings of Israel. These are the very salutations with which the patriarchs were wont to address strangers; and these the prayers for their safety and welfare when they took their departure. At whatever house we lodged, a sheep or a lamb was killed for us and fresh bread baked. It was sometimes near sunset when we reached the house; but in due time the dainties appeared. To whatever village we went among the Druzes, pressing invitations were given to stay and eat. Once and again has one seized my horse's bridle and said, 'Will not my lord descend while his servants prepare a little food.' In one village our interces-

sion saved a lamb which we saw hurried away to slaughter just as we entered the street, before even a word had been spoken. The chief had seen us approaching, and 'he made haste to kill the lamb;' fortunately we were in time to save it by assuring its hospitable master that we *could not* remain. At another village, where we took refuge from a passing shower, we observed the flour taken and water poured upon it to prepare unleavened cakes, and it was with difficulty that we could prevent the work from being prosecuted."

The great traveller, Burckhardt, who had prepared himself for journeying among the Arabs by getting a practical knowledge of their language and by identifying himself with them till he could no longer be distinguished from a native Bedawy, and toward whom, owing to his poverty in appearance, there would be no possible motive except hospitality to a stranger, says of one of his stopping-places in the Sinai peninsula: "The Arabs had a long and fierce dispute among themselves to decide who should have the honor of furnishing us with a supper and a breakfast the next morning. He who first sees a stranger from afar, and exclaims 'There comes my guest,' has the right of entertaining him, whatever tent he may alight at. A lamb was killed for me, which was an act of great hospitality, for these Bedouins were poor. . . . . A Bedouin will praise the guest who departs from him without making any other remuneration than that of bestowing a blessing upon them and their encampment, much more than him who thinks to redeem all obligation by payment."

But very strangely combined with this is a habit of importunate begging, not, however, seemingly, through any fondness for possession, for after receiving, the Arab will the next moment give the object as freely away. Layard says of Mohammed Emin, sheikh of the Jebours, "a complete patriarch of his tribe:"

"During our intercourse I had every reason to be satisfied

with his hospitality and the cordial aid he afforded me. His chief fault was a habit of begging for everything. Always willing to give, he was equally ready to receive. In this respect, however, all Arabs are alike, and when the habit is understood, it is no longer a source of inconvenience, as on a refusal no offence is taken." He adds of him, "All he takes he divides among his friends, and he gladly risks his life to get that which is spent in an hour. An Arab will beg for a whole day for a shirt or a kerchief, and five minutes after he has obtained it he will give it to the first person who may happen to admire it."

Simple as children in these as well as in many other respects, theirs is still the very poetry of life, and their disposition has also very much of this character of poetry. Layard was travelling over the plains by the Euphrates with Suttum, an Arab sheikh, who as their horses dashed gaily along amid interminable beds of flowers, exclaimed in his excitement, "What kef (delight) has God given us equal to this? It is the only thing worth living for. Ya, Beg! what do dwellers in cities know of true happiness? They have never seen grass or flowers. May God have pity on them!" But that poetry of life had even to Suttum its counterpart of dark and gloomy prose; and this was in his own tent and connected with his household. His wife "Rathaiyah," says Layard, "was a sister of Suttum Meekh, chief of the powerful tribe of Abde, one of the principal divisions of the Shammar. Although no longer young, she still retained much of her early beauty. There was more than the usual Bedouin fire in her large, black eyes, and her hair fell in many ringlets on her shoulders. Her temper was haughty and imperious, and she evidently had more sway over Suttum than he liked to acknowledge, or was quite consistent with his character as a warrior. He had married her from motives of policy, as cementing a useful alliance with a powerful tribe. She appears to have soon carried matters

with a high hand, for poor Suttum had been compelled, almost immediately after his marriage, to send back a young and beautiful wife to her father's tent."

It was not wonderful that the sheikh should rejoice in that wild freedom out of his tent; but for a man even more sobered down than he was by domestic troubles, there was truly an exhilaration in that sea of flowers spreading on every side. "During our stay at Arban,"[1] says Layard, "the color of these great plains was undergoing a continual change. After being for some days of a golden yellow, a new family of flowers would spring up, and it would turn almost in a night to a bright scarlet, which would again suddenly give way to the deepest blue. Then the meadows would be mottled with various hues, or would put on an enamelled green of the most luxuriant pastures. The glowing descriptions I had frequently received from the Bedouins of the beauty and fertility of the banks of the Khabour were more than realized."

Respecting a tribe on the move by the Sinjar wells, he says, "The narrow valleys and ravines were blood-red with gigantic poppies. The Bedouins adorned their camels and horses with the scarlet flowers and twisted them into their own head-dresses and long garments. Even the Tiyari dressed themselves up in the gaudy trappings of nature; and as we journeyed, chanting the Arab war-song, we resembled the return of a festive procession from some sacrifice of old. During our weary marches under the burning sun it required some such episode to keep up the drooping spirits of the men who toiled on foot by our side. Poetry and flowers are the wine and spirits of the Arab; a couplet is

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[1] Arban is on the Khabour a tributary to the Euphrates; is the place to which the Israelites were carried, and where they "hung their harps upon the willows." It is about ninety miles S. E. from Haran, where Abraham stopped for a while, and where Jacob procured his two wives.

equal to a bottle, and a rose to a dram, without the evil effects of either.

"The middle of March in Mesopotomia is the highest epoch of spring. Flowers of every hue enamelled the meadows, not thinly scattered over the grass as in Northern climes, but in such thick and gathering clusters that the whole plain seemed a patchwork of many colors. . . . .

"Although such scenes as these may be described, the exhilaration caused by the air of the desert in spring, and the feeling of freedom arising from the contemplation of its boundless expanse, must have been experienced before it can be understood. The stranger as well as the Arab feels the intoxication of the senses which they produce. . . . .

Subsequently, "It was one of those calm and pleasant evenings which in spring make a paradise of the desert. The breeze bland and perfumed by the odor of flowers came calmly over the plain. As the sun went down, countless camels and sheep wandered to the tents, and the melancholy call of the herdsmen rose above the bleating of the flocks."

We continue extracts in order to give the reader an idea of this singular kind of life in all its aspects.

"Their [shammar] sheikh's dress differed but in the quality of the material from those of his followers. A thick kerchief, striped with red, yellow and blue, and fringed with long plaited cords, was thrown over his head and fell down his shoulders. It was held in its place, above the brow, by a band of spun camel's wool, tied at intervals by silken threads of many colors. A long white shirt, descending to the ankles, and a black and white cloak over it, completed his attire. He led Rassam[1] and myself to the top of the tent, where we seated ourselves on well-worn carpets. When all the party had found places, the words of welcome which had been exchanged before we dismounted, were repeated.

[1] British Vice-consul at Mosul, opposite the site of Nineveh.

'Peace be with you, O Beg! upon my head you are welcome; my house is your house,' exclaimed the sheikh, addressing the stranger nearest to him. 'Peace be with you, O Soffuk! may God protect you,' was the answer, and similar compliments were made to every guest and every person present."

Mrs. Rassam, their companion on this occasion, was conducted to the tent of the females of Soffuk's household, and of them we are informed, that,

"Of the three ladies now forming his harêm, the chief was Amsha, a lady celebrated in the song of every Arab of the desert for her beauty and noble blood. She was daughter of Hassan, sheikh of the Tai, a tribe tracing its origin from remotest antiquity, and one of whose chiefs, Hatem, is a hero of Eastern romance. . . . . From her rank and beauty she has earned the title of 'Queen of the desert.' Her form, traceable through the thin shirt she wore like other Arab women, was well-proportioned and graceful. She was tall in stature and fair in complexion. Her features were regular and her eyes dark and brilliant. She had undoubtedly claims to more than ordinary beauty; to the Arabs she was perfection, for all the resources of their art had been exhausted to complete what nature had begun. . . . .

"Her menage combined, if old song be true, the domestic and the queenly, and was carried on with a nice appreciation of economy. The immense sheet of black goat-hair canvas which formed the tent was supported by twelve or fourteen stout poles, and was completely open on one side. Being entirely set apart for the women, it had no partitions, as in a tent of a common Arab, who is obliged to reserve a corner for the reception of guests. Between the centre poles were placed, upright and close to one another, large camel and goat-hair sacks, filled with rice, corn, barley, coffee and other household stuff, their mouths being, of course, uppermost. Upon these were spread carpets and cushions, on

which Amsha reclined. Around her, squatted on the ground, were some fifty handmaidens tending the wide caldron, baking bread in an iron plate heated over the ashes, or shaking between them a skin suspended between three stakes and filled with milk, to be thus churned into butter. It is the privilege of the head-wife to prepare in her tent the dinners of the sheikh's guests. The fires, lighted on all sides, sent forth a cloud of smoke which hung heavily under the folds of the tent, and would long before have dimmed any eyes less bright than those of Amsha. As supplies were asked for by the women, she lifted a corner of her carpet and untied the mouths of the sacks and distributed their contents. To show her authority and rank, she poured continually upon her attendants a torrent of abuse, and honored them with epithets of which I may be excused attempting to give a translation; her vocabulary equalling if not excelling in richness that of the highly educated lady of the city. The combination of the domestic and the authoritative was thus complete.

"Amsha, as I have observed, shared the affections, though not the tent, of Soffuk—for each establishment had a tent of its own—with two other ladies; Antonia, an Arab not much inferior to her rival in personal appearance; and Ferrah, originally a Yezidi slave, who had no pretensions to beauty. Amsha, however, always maintained her sway, and the others could not sit, without her leave, in her presence. To her alone were confided the keys of the larder—supposing Soffuk to have had either keys or larder—and there was no appeal from her authority on all subjects of domestic economy."

On another page of Layard's book we have before us a sheikh who may answer well to the picture in our minds of the Hebrew, Abraham. He says:

"In the afternoon [when near the Sinjar hills] Suttum's father, Rishwan, came to us, accompanied by several sheikhs

of the Boraij. He rode on a white deloul [female dromedary] celebrated for her beauty and swiftness. His saddle and the neck of the animal were profusely adorned with woollen tassels of many colors, glass beads and small shells after the manner of the Arabs of the Nejo. The well-trained dromedary having knelt at the door of my tent, the old man alighted, and throwing his arms around my neck, kissed me on both shoulders. He was tall and of noble carriage. His beard was white with age, but his form was still erect and his footstep firm. Rishwan was one of the bravest warriors of the Shammar [his tribe]. He had come, when a child, with his father from the original seat of the tribe in Northern Arabia. . . . . He was a noble specimen of the true Bedouin, both in character and appearance. With the skill and daring of the Arab warrior, he united the hospitality, generosity and good faith of the hero of Arab romance. He spoke the rich dialect of the desert tongue with the eloquence peculiar to his race."

We quote from the journal a few days after this. "The Bedouin can tell at once, when drawing near to an encampment, the tent of the sheikh. It is generally distinguished by its size, and frequently by the spears standing in the front of it. If the stranger be not coming directly toward it, and wishes to be a guest of the chief, he goes out of his way that, on approaching, he may ride at once to it without passing any other, as it is considered uncourteous and almost an insult to go by a man's tent without stopping and eating his bread. The owner of a tent has even a right to claim any one as his guest who passes in front of it on entering an encampment. . . . .

"As we seated ourselves [at Rishwan's tent] two sheep were slain before us for a feast; a ceremony it would not have been considered sufficiently hospitable to perform previous to our arrival, as it might have been doubtful whether the animals had been slain wholly for us."

We close with some notices of the manner in which this poetry of life produces its effect on the dwellers in tents. Layard says:

"Amongst the Bedouins who watched our camels was one Saoud, a poet of renown among the tribes. With the exception of a few ballads that he had formerly composed in honor of Soffuk and other celebrated Shammar sheikhs, he chiefly recited extemporary stanzas on passing events, or on persons who were present. He would sit in my tent of an evening and sing his verses in a wild though plaintive strain, to the great delight of the assembled guests, and particularly of Migwell [another Sheikh], who, like a true Bedouin, was easily affected by poetry, especially with such as might touch his own passion for the unknown lady [whom he was wooing]. He would sway his body to and fro, keeping time with the measure, sobbing aloud as the poet sang the death of his companions in war, breaking out into loud laughter when the burden of the ditty was a satire upon his friends, making extraordinary noises and grimaces to show his feelings, more like a drunken man than a sober Bedouin. But when the bard improvised an amatory ditty, the young chief's excitement was almost beyond control. The other Bedouins were scarcely less affected by these rude measures, which had the same effect on the wild tribes of the Persian mountains. Such verse, chanted by their self-taught poets, or by the girls of their encampment, would drive warriors to the combat fearless of death, or prove an ample reward on their return from the dangers of the *ghazon* [raid] or the fight. The excitement they produce exceeds that of the grape."

A similar scene connected with bardic song is described by Mr. Thos. W. Atkinson, who travelled among the Kirghis' pastoral tribes on the high plateaus of Central Asia, and shows how uniform is the effect of that mode of life. He says:

"After proceeding more than an hour, I beheld a large aoul [encampment] three or four miles off, and toward it I turned. Two Kirghis presently met me and led me to their chief, whom we found sitting at the door of his yourt[1] like a patriarch surrounded by his family, having in front his poet singing the great deeds of his race. He rose to receive me, gave me a seat on his own carpet, and then the bard continued his song.

"This family group, the glowing sky and the vast plain with the thousands of animals scattered over it, formed a charming picture. Homer was never listened to with more attention than was this shepherd poet, while singing the traditions of the ancestors of the tribe. Whatever power the old Greek possessed over the minds of his audience was equalled by that of the bard before me. When he had sung of the mountain scenes around, the pastoral habits of the people, their flocks and herds, the faces of his hearers were calm and they sat unmoved. But when he began to recite the warlike deeds of their race, their eyes flashed with delight; as he proceeded, they were worked up in a passion, and some of them grasped their battle-axes and sprang to their feet in a state of frenzy. Then followed a mournful strain, telling of the death of a chief, when all excitement ceased, and every one listened with deep attention. Such was the sway this unlettered bard had over the minds of his wild comrades."[2]

To this may be added, from another traveller, a well-outlined sketch of a modern sheikh near Warka, the very region from which Abraham originally came. "Sheikh Fahad (the Tiger) was a tall, stout, handsome man, forty-five or fifty years of age, with regular features, and the slightly aquiline nose so peculiar to the high-class Arab. His fore-

[1] Movable house made with wattles and skins and cloth.

[2] Travels in the Regions of the Upper and Lower Amour, by Thos. W. Atkinson, F. R. G. S., F. G. S.

head was lofty and expansive, full of thought and energy. The expressive black eyes, as they glanced from one to another of the party, beamed with kindness and good-humor; but it was not difficult to conceive them assuming a very different aspect on other occasions. Conscious of his importance, high birth and dignity, he bestowed his salaams with the grace and pride of a monarch."[1]

We give one more extract, in order to show how carefully the unwritten genealogical records are preserved in those countries. It is from Lady Duff Gordon's "Letters from Egypt," 1863. She was writing at this time from near Thebes:

"It was more biblical than ever; the people were all relations of Mustafa's, and to see Seedee Omar, the head of the household and a young man, come in from the field, and the flocks and herds and camels and asses, is all like a beautiful dream. All these people are of good blood, and a sort of 'roll of battle' is kept for the genealogies of the noble Arabs who came in with Amer, the first Arab conqueror and lieutenant of Omar. Not one of these brown men, who do not own a second shirt, would give his brown daughter to the greatest Turkish pasha."

These extracts are long, but not too long if they enable us to bring before our minds more fully and vividly the sheikh-life of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and Esau, and also the tent-life of Moses, and subsequently of the whole Hebrew race during the forty years of the wanderings in the desert. Amid circumstances like these, people must have a cast of character peculiar to themselves. In settled communities there is a close pressure of society upon each of its members, holding them to laws of honesty and veracity, and general integrity of conduct, which can be more

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[1] *Travels and Researches in Chaldea and Susiana*, by Wm. Kennet Loftus, F. G. S.

easily escaped from where every individual is more of an atom disunited from others; but, at the same time, the plottings and cabals in close congregations of people, the corruptions from luxury and the disguises and frauds incident to crowded societies, are not known in the simple habits belonging to a pastoral life. A bounding sense of freedom is cultivated in the latter, which keeps man up to the proper dignity of his nature. We see also in these extracts how the *bardic* spirit was cultivated and had many admirers, and how it broke in upon the seeming monotony of tent-life. We can imagine how, in the evenings, the listeners gathered around the improvisatores in the tents at Beersheba, or at Shechem, or the wanderings in the desert, or far subsequently at the Khabour; and how thus, when inspiration came upon prophets and others, it so readily and uniformly took the poetic form.

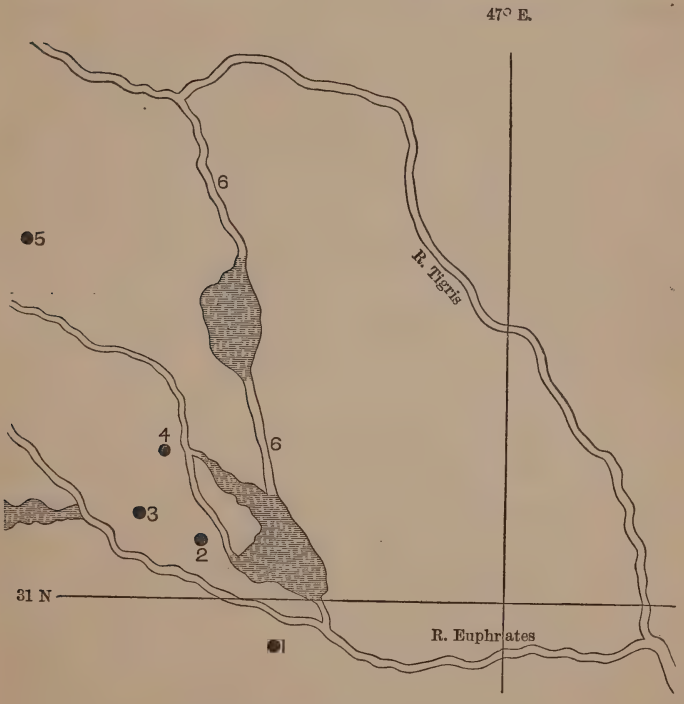
CHAPTER III.

"UR OF THE CHALDEES."

FAR down the Euphrates, and near the spot where the Tigris joins that stream, is a region to which the curiosity of scholars had been directed though earnestly yet unavailingly for a great many years; but which has recently been laid open to us through the enterprise of two successive English travellers. It was known that the Talmudists and the early Arabians designated this spot as the birth-place of Abraham, and that a city there situated was called Ur by the learned Arab geographers.

The region is one that might well have tempted curiosity, apart from such religious interest; for although it is now but a sandy waste, with only a few specks of green where the

marshes connected with the two rivers cause some fertility, it is sprinkled over with lofty and very extensive mounds formed by ruined edifices, and history intimates that cities had risen and flourished there long before Babylon was known. The region had the attraction of mystery, and was connected with the earliest religions of the world. We are now also aware that these cities were deemed so sacred in the



Map of the Supposed Ur of the Chaldees.
1, Mugeyer. 2, Sinkara. 3, Warka. 4, Tel Ede. 5, Niffar. 6, Shat-el-Hie.

ancient times as to be each a great necropolis even for countries far distant. The extensive explorations at Nineveh and those at Babylon have not disclosed a single place of interment there; the dead of an immense extent of country

seem to have been all floated down the Euphrates and Tigris for interment in the sacred soil of Ur of the Chaldees.

The country is inhabited by half-savage tribes of fanatical people, always at war with each other, and so hostile to strangers that, in connection with the marshes and the difficulties of subsisting in such a place, explorations had been prevented. But in 1840 Mr. W. Kennet Loftus, F. G. S., geologist on the staff of Col. Williams appointed on a joint commission from England, Russia, and the Shah of Persia for the settlement of boundary lines, was able to go there under the protection of the Turkish and Persian governments. His course was by Niffar (see No. 5 in map), and thus on to Mugeyer, the latter of which is six miles southward from the Euphrates. This region is now one hundred and twenty-five miles from the Persian Gulf, but there is reason to suppose that it was, in its populous times, much nearer, and perhaps bordered quite upon the gulf.

All these immense mounds, standing there in the great wastes of utter solitude, are interesting; but that of Mugeyer is found to be especially so from having the only existing remains of a Chaldean temple not buried under rubbish, and also from written records which that temple has preserved for our reading. Mugeyer, meaning "The mother of bitumen," is a name given to the spot by the present natives on account of the quantities of that substance used alone, or sometimes with reeds, to give cohesion to the bricks, either burnt or sun-dried, of which the structures are composed. The ruins at this place consist of a low series of mounds, and extend from north to south a distance of more than half a mile; but the name is given by the natives especially to a structure one hundred and ninety-eight feet long by one hundred and thirty-three in width, and about seventy feet high, the whole elevation being still further increased by a wider platform or substructure thirty feet in height. This building is in two distinct, massive stories, the lower one

strengthened by buttresses; the natives say that on the upper story was formerly an additional edifice, which is indeed attested by rubbish there five feet in height, showing probably where was the temple of their goddess.

Remains of the Ancient Temple of the Moon-goddess Hurki, at Mugeyer.
(*From a drawing by Mr. Taylor.*)

The success of Mr. Loftus in this visit induced Mr. Taylor, British consul at Busrah, to venture on other explorations there in 1854, the result of which was the discovery of a perfect, inscribed cylinder under each of the angles of the upper story of this temple, giving us a record of an invaluable kind. The arrow-headed letters of this inscription have been deciphered by that eminent scholar in such records, Sir Henry Rawlinson; and they inform us that the temple was commenced by King Ur-uck, completed by his son Ilgi, and afterward repaired by Nabonidus, king of Babylon.[1]

[1] This record also removes an apparent discrepancy between the Scriptures and profane historians respecting Belshazzar, by informing us that Bel-shar-ezer was the oldest son of Nabonidus, and was admitted to share in his government. Sir Henry Rawlinson also reads on this cylinder the name Kudur-Mapula, which he supposes to be the same as Chedorlaomer.

The bricks of which the temple is built bear on them the name of Ur-uck. His reign is placed by chronologists at B. C. 2230 years, or about 230 years before the call of Abraham. The temple was dedicated to the goddess Hurki, or the Moon. Sir Henry Rawlinson, in consequence of reading in this inscription the name Hur, supposes the identification of this place with Ur of the Chaldees to be complete. He believes that Niffar (see map) was the primitive Calneh (Gen. x. 10), that it was dedicated to Belus, and was called also by the name of that god; and that there was the original tower of Babel.

Another item relative to this temple of the Moon-goddess Hurki is of importance to us in connection with the subject we are now considering. Its angles are exactly toward the four points of the compass, as was the case with all the other Chaldean temples; and the large one at Birs-nimrûd, near the site of ancient Babylon, one hundred and thirty miles northwest from this, gives proof that they all had reference to astronomy as well as to religion. This at Birs-nimrûd shows, as well by its distinct stages or offsets as by the careful pointing of its angles, that it was copied from the more primitive ones at Ur; but it was on a much larger scale, having a base two hundred and seventy-two feet on each side and a height of one hundred and fifty-six feet, its elevation being by seven successive steps. It was designated by Nebuchadnezzar as "The Stages of the Seven Spheres:" the lower story was colored black, in honor of the planet Saturn; the next, orange, for the planet Jupiter; the third, red, for Mars; the fourth, yellow, for the Sun; the fifth, green, for Venus; the sixth, blue, for Mercury; and the last was surmounted by a temple, probably white, for the Moon. Remains of a temple still to be made out at Warka (see map) have also these receding steps; and the whole of these structures had evidently a close connection with astronomical science, which indeed we know was cultivated very largely

and successfully in those regions. The atmosphere there might well induce to contemplations of the heavens; for while, with us, stars of the sixth magnitude are the smallest to be seen by the naked eye, there, two magnitudes lower, the eighth, are visible without telescopic help. "The Chaldeans were the first people who reduced their observations of the heavens to a regular system. On the authority of Berosus[1] it is recorded that when Alexander took Babylon, Callisthenes forwarded to his relative Aristotle, in Greece, a catalogue of eclipses which had been observed at Babylon during the previous 1903 years [back to about 2225 B. C.]. Ptolemy refers to eclipses in the year 720 B. C., which were derived from a Chaldean source. It is to these early astronomers that we are indebted for the Zodiac and the duodecimal divisions of the day."[2]

Perhaps we may find in these earliest temples to their gods and to mystic sciences connected with them a sufficient cause for the peculiar sacredness of this region; but, however this may have originated, the result is before us in the existing immense deposits of human remains, layer above layer, to a known height of thirty, and it is supposed of even sixty, feet. Mr. Loftus says: "It is difficult to convey anything like a correct notion of the piles upon piles of human relics which utterly astound the beholder. Excepting only a triangular space [at Warka] between the three principal ruins, the whole remainder of space within the walls and an unknown extent of desert beyond them are everywhere filled with the bones and sepulchres of the dead. There is probably no other site in the world which can compare with Warka in this respect; even the tombs of ancient Thebes do not contain such an aggregate amount of mortality. From its foundation by Urukh until finally

[1] A native of Babylon and priest of Belus, supposed to have lived about 268 B. C.

[2] Vide Loftus.

abandoned by the Parthians—a period, probably, of twenty-five hundred years—Warka appears to have been a sacred burial-place:" and not only Warka, but Mugeyer, and indeed all this region, seem to have had a peculiar sacredness which brought to them the dead from all the regions bordering upon the Euphrates and the Tigris. These remains are found enclosed in earthenware coffins lined inside with bitumen: those of the more ancient kind are top-shaped, and contained only bones, perhaps only a head: more recent ones were formed like an oval dish from four to seven feet long and from one to three feet in depth: and finally come others shaped like slippers. Mr. Taylor discovered, at Mugeyer, a mound full of the dish-covered coffins.

There are at present two sacred Mohammedan shrines at Kerbella and Mashad Ali, only a few miles higher up the river, to which believers in that faith of a certain sect bring their dead for interment from all parts of Persia and even from India.

Was Mugeyer the "Ur of the Chaldees" from which Abraham was called? The proof is clear that the place was called Hur or Ur at about Abraham's time; that the king just previous to that was called Ur-uck; that he built this temple to the goddess Hur or the Moon; that it was a very sacred place and so famous that the simple expression "Ur of the Chaldees" would be widely understood and need no further explanation. We know also that the ancient Jews, and after them the Arabian writers, among whom geography, as well as all other sciences, was thoroughly cultivated, designated this as the place. The name may not have belonged to the capital only, but have embraced the adjoining district on both sides of the Euphrates.

There are two other claimants for this distinction of being the birth-place of Abraham. One is Ur, a fortress on the Tigris near Habra; but there is no tradition in its favor, and the argument for it rests only on its

identity of name and on its distance from Haran, such as seems to be required in the scriptural account. The other claimant, called Orfa, also Urfa, Roha, Orchoe, Callirhoe, Chaldeopolis, Edessa and "Antioch of the far East," lies on the edge of one of the bare, rugged spurs which descend from the mountains of Armenia into the Assyrian plains, and has an advocate in Stanley, formerly Regius Professor of Ecclesiastical History in the University of Oxford. This was undoubtedly an early nucleus of civilization, made so by its natural strength of position and by a large fountain of pure water, which springing out there gives richness and beauty to the plain below. The belief of the Turkish Mohammedans is in its favor, and it had a distinguished position in the early Christian Church; but an insuperable objection to Orfa appears to lie in the fact that Chaldea, even in its most extended sense, was never considered as reaching so high up as that, not higher than Sinjar, which is south of Orfa. This latter place is also only a short day's journey from Haran (Charran), and in sight from it, both facts being in opposition to the cause of the removal from it as given in Jos. Antiq. i. 6, §5, and also as presented in Acts vii. 3.

CHAPTER IV.

GOD IN HISTORY.

ALREADY in Abraham's time idolatry had been thoroughly engrafted upon society all over the world. The rapidity of its extension and its universality must seem strange to us situated amid our means of constant enlightenment; but we must look back at the world and consider it as it was at that period. To worship God as a being seen and felt only

by our intellect and heart is the highest act of our nature; and even in our days of enlightenment and Christianity, men are constantly asking aid from the outer senses, and procuring it in architectural embellishments, altars, ceremonies and adornments of various kinds. Man, even in his best condition, has a tendency to *sensuous* religion; that is, a religion drawing helps from the outer senses, which helps it may appropriate to such a degree as to make the whole of religion itself lie in such outward means.

If this be true in our present enlightened society, what must it have been in those very ancient times, when knowledge was scarce and the intellect in a comparatively uneducated state? With this tendency to the sensuous in all, men could easily be induced to slide into idolatry, through the cravings of the heart for objects for its reverence; and the process into this is so well described by the great Jewish writer, Maimonides (A. D. 1190), that we transcribe it here:

"In the days of Enos[1] the sons of Adam erred with a very great error, and the counsels of the wise men of that age became brutish; and Enos himself was one of those that erred; and the error was this. They said, 'Forasmuch as God has created these stars and spheres to govern the world, and set them on high and imparted honor unto them, and they are ministers to minister before him, it is well that men should laud and glorify them, and give them honor. For this is the will of God, that we magnify and honor whatsoever he magnifieth and honoreth; even as a king would have those honored who stand before him; and this is the honor of the king himself.'"

But such idolatry, however simple in its original forms, would very soon degenerate into grossness; and we know that under specious disguises it began immediately to administer to the most corrupt and disgusting propensities of

[1] Grandson of Adam, Gen. v. 6.

man's nature, taking sanctions even under the name of religion itself. The sun became Baal or the Sun-god; the moon became Ashteroth, the Moon-goddess, the Astarte of the Syrians and Venus of the Greeks; the two were considered the representative principles of all life, and together as the cause of life; and then, in their temples, and as parts of worship, were introduced scenes such as in our cities are hid away in filthy purlieus not even fit to be named.

That was the natural and, indeed, the inevitable tendency of idolatry even after commencing in its simplest forms. The result would not be otherwise when once the human heart had broken loose from God; time could only add grossness, filth and corruption, under which all wickedness of the human heart would find disguises and take specious names, even those of religion itself. The history of the world shows this to be true.

Would God, we reasonably ask, give the world up to this without any sign for himself in its wide extent? Man has been made a free agent, as we know in ourselves; but would God abandon this free-agency to every vagary of its powers without ever a protest against error or a demonstration for the truth as it lies in himself? He who has been so careful for our bodies, would he never care for the soul thus striving for an object for its reverence and making false gods for its worship? We might assuredly expect that God would not thus abandon the world.

But any continuous proofs for himself would yet have to be through human beings, and these beings constituted as others are, with passions and frailties and tendencies such as are common to men. He would not constitute for this a perfect nation of perfect men; for that would require a perpetual miracle in each individual case; but he would take people like to other people, and upon them and their history would write his own name, to be thus held up before the world. Errors there would be among such men, sins often,

and then the penalties of sin brought clearly out as penalties; national risings and fallings; glory and gloom; but on all of these God's righteous dealing stamped, so that the world to latest ages might see and know. Indeed, a history like this would be an alphabet by which men might read God in all other history and might judge and learn. What a record that would be! *God in history.* None would be prevented from outbreakings in sin, not even the greatest and best men; even these might fall into dark crime; and then perhaps the record of deep contrition and of restoration, or else of sure retribution, would be written. A strange, chequered history it would be, indeed, must be, if fully given, with its full requitals for good or evil! God in all!!

And then at the last, as we know, there was to be, in this history, a most strange and wonderful manifestation of God himself in our own nature;—a perfect man and perfect God; a perfect example and teacher, and then a self-sacrifice of himself for the sin of the world. Immeasurably the strangest of all histories it would be!

'There lived in those ancient times at Ur of the Chaldees, a family consisting of Terah the father, and several descendants, who had intermarried among themselves, as was the custom in that early period of the world. There had been three sons to Terah, but Haran, the oldest of these, was now dead; Nahor was the next, and Abram the youngest of the three. Haran had left three children, Milcah, Iscah, and Lot, and Nahor had married the eldest of these, his niece. Abram was married to Sarai, daughter of his father, but not by his own mother, or, as most Jewish writers assert, the same as Iscah; for although he afterward declared her to be his half sister, the word daughter as he used it may imply any female descendant, and sister may have meant any female relative by blood.[1] She was a woman of

[1] Such was Jewish usage.

great beauty, if we may judge from subsequent events. Our feelings are shocked by the nearness of this relationship in a wife; but such usages had come down from times when they were necessary on account of the sparseness of population in the world. The group thus united appear to have been a pastoral family, and to have lived on the eastern side of the Euphrates, if we may suppose Ur to have been the name of a district as well as of the capital of the country. The family, if we look at it attentively, seems to present to us the spectacle of the father[1] and the elder living son given to idolatry,[1] while Abram stood as an exception to the rest. It must have required a great force of character and of independent thinking to be an exception in such a place as Ur, so distinguished in the worship of the Moon-goddess, and with such an especial sacredness already widely established in the eyes of the world. Not to accord with the general sentiment would stamp a man with the character of free-thinker, simpleton, and a detractor of the peculiar honors due to the country and the people. Those temples at Ur, although their structure shows them to be of the earliest type answering to their supposed date, appear clearly to indicate a connection between science and national worship; and the man who would stand in open nonconformity to the latter, would also appear to be setting himself in opposition to the former. We can thus appreciate the boldness, independence and firmness of Abram in any opposition that he might offer to the national sentiment and action. Religion and science, and what perhaps it took still more courage to oppose, the feeling of peculiar sacredness in the place, bringing honor and wealth to it from distant regions, seemed all to be violated by his holding back from the worship of their goddess. It may now almost seem to us as if the temples and those immense multitudes of the

[1] See Josh. xxiv. 2; Gen. xxxi. 20; xxxv. 2.

dead were left in the wide solitudes to testify to us the strong specialty of the man whom God took now for his own purposes of infinite blessings to mankind.

We see at once that Abram was a man of striking characteristics, and had a clear, reasoning head, an independent spirit, a good true heart and devout affections: and we are prepared now to hear him called by some supernal intimation—how commenced and afterward continued we know not, but recognized clearly by him as from God: "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall show thee"[1]—a command which he made no hesitation in obeying, however surprising it may have seemed to him.

He was then seventy-five years of age. Accompanied by his father and brother, and many other members of the family, whom this strong-minded, firm man induced to attend him, he left "Ur of the Chaldees;" and we can see him travelling on, whether far up the left bank of the Euphrates, or whatever the direction, musing deeply as he went at those mysterious words from the God whom he acknowledged. He was bound to that God now by a new tie of mysterious personal revelations and communings, as he had been before to him by reason and his heart's fealty. Whither was he to be led? what was to be the result? he might naturally ask; and we may well believe that his companions put the queries, if he did not; but as is often the case with strongest, clearest minds, there was also in him a child-like, confiding spirit, and he led the way over those vast plains with unwavering confidence in the divine guidance.

The country was pleasant; it is so at all seasons, but especially in the spring season, when it is thus described by Loftus: "Broad plains of the richest verdure enlivened with

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[1] Acts vii. 3.

flowers of every hue met our delighted gaze on either side of the noble river. The cry of the velvet-breasted francolin and the sand-grouse rushing overhead like the irresistible wind," mingled with the noise of innumerable insects, while also the wild bears tempted to the chase. We know from Layard how cheerful was often the journeying over those vast plains.

In latitude about 35° 55′ N. and longitude 39° E. from Greenwich, the Euphrates, there flowing eastwardly, is joined by the river Belik coming from the north; and up this river about fifty miles, situated between the two branches uniting to form it, was Haran, or Padan Aram; and there the travellers paused for a while, in a region beautifully fitted for pastoral life. All this country was indeed so fitted; but it was not to be Abram's resting-place, although he seems to have been well pleased with the spot. He needed another call to induce him to leave.

Here Terah died, and the bond which had united the family around the aged man, then two hundred and five years old, was severed.

Here also was sundered the brotherly tie between Nahor and Abram; for the latter was called to proceed still farther, and Nahor preferred to remain in the attractive region of Haran. The older brother was indeed not yet free from idolatrous tendencies, and it was doubtless best that Abram should be isolated from any such influences exerted upon his household.

The divine call here was clear and full and emphatic, and accompanied with promises of blessing that might well cheer the man destined to be an alien from country and friends. "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee; and I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing. And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him

that curseth thee; and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed."

There have been many conjectures as to the manner of these supernatural communications to Abram. They seem to be resolved into four methods,—voices, apparitions, visions and the powerful agency of the Spirit of God: any curiosity on the subject, however, though it may seem rational, is not gratified. The Scriptures merely speak of these strange, mysterious visitations as they would of common facts; and while we are startled, and wonder, there is no explanation, as if the simple announcement was to be satisfactory to our minds. To Abram, the divine communication, however it might come, was satisfactory, as was proved by his immediate, implicit obedience now and on subsequent occasions, however painful and even terrible that course of obedience at times threatened to be. Manly as he was, and strong in many characteristics, when God's will was manifested to him he showed a ready yielding of his own will, a child-like simplicity of trust like that impressed upon us in our Saviour's teaching, when he put children before his disciples and said, "Of such are the kingdom of heaven." Abram had weaknesses: he fell into sin both base and shameful, as we shall see by and by: God did not take him as a perfect man; but there is, as the most striking trait in his life, this yielding of will, this simple trust, which make us feel that he was the worthiest of all men for this high honor put upon him by his Maker.

He trusted implicitly in this new call to go: and taking with him his wife and nephew Lot, "and all their substance that they had gathered, and the souls that they had gotten in Haran," started on his journey, not knowing whither it would lead, but *trusting*. How firm and strong he was in that trust!

Thus strangely led, and commanded to journey on, this company of travellers now took their course from Haran

toward the unknown West; the land unknown, the purpose of the journey unknown, the end unknown. They only knew that God had spoken and was their guide. Abram was now cut off from all old associates and from kindred, except the little company with him, which quickly began to be a mere speck in the deserts of sand into which their way soon led them. From even these few companions of his journey he was in a great measure isolated by that mysterious companionship which seemed to make him a unit on the earth. As he went on, his strong common sense must have revolved the singular past, the singular promises for the future, the singular uncertainty of location before him; and if puzzling questions were not started in his own mind, they were put to him by others, none of which he was able to answer, except only this one: God had spoken; he was to obey. How far satisfactory such reply might be to those with him, toiling on over the sands and parched with thirst, and how far satisfactory to his wife, as she and all compared the present prospect around them with the rich lands and verdure they had left behind, must have depended on their faith; and in their present condition and surroundings the strongest faith would be apt to droop, and perhaps to change into repining and rebellion.

The desert of Arabia lying westward from Mesopotamia stretches far upward toward the north, and it here interposed its parched, dreary sands on their way. Their route was doubtless by what afterward became the caravan-way from Assyria through Palmyra to Damascus; for only on this way are fountains to be met with, and those but few and at long intervals. Around these fountains vegetation springs up and nature takes a refreshing aspect, but between them are only level stretches of utterly barren sands, or hills equally as bare and forbidding as are the yellow, scorched valleys that lie between their white, rocky sides.

Thus the company of travellers moved on, till, at the end

of eight or nine days from Haran, the green plain about Damascus opened before them, and beyond it the great range of Anti-Lebanon stretched its vast length, terminated at its southern part by Hermon lifting its snow-crowned summits eight thousand feet into the sky.

How long they paused in their journey at this place is uncertain: but beautiful as is, and was then, this most fertile region watered by the Abana and Pharpar, it was not to be their home. They turned here doubtless to the southward, through what is now the Haurán, a most fertile region, and then already thickly peopled, as houses apparently built in those days and still standing, almost uninjured by time, now testify. Here again the company came in contact with the worship of the Moon-goddess, and even a city, Ashteroth Karnaim[1] (the horned or crescented Ashteroth), called by her name. Here were dwelling the Rephaim, races of men famous for their gigantic proportions, with which the descendants of Abram were afterward to come in warlike collision.

Thus they proceeded onward toward the south, among the hills, covered with the "oaks of Bashan," and along the rich valleys of that region, until presently they struck the river Jabbok; and then turning westwardly they reached the Jordan, crossing which they saw about them their destined home, the land of Canaan.[2]

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[1] See Gen. xiv. 5.

[2] The route given here is in its first part the one required in order to find water across the desert. The latter part is inferred by their reaching Canaan first at Shechem. It was also the route evidently followed by Jacob on his return from Haran.

CHAPTER V.

IN CANAAN.

THEIR first stopping-place might well have put them in love with their new home; for it must always have been a delightful spot, and it is at this day considered the garden of Palestine. In fertility it was equal, and in variety of aspect it was far superior, to the place of their former residence by the Euphrates. A plain about twelve miles long stretches here from north to south. On the west of it rise two mountains about eight hundred feet high, separated by a valley one thousand feet in width; and proceeding up this valley a short distance we come to fountains, of which there is a succession still further westwardly, giving unrivalled fertility to all this region. Fruit and other trees clothe the hill-sides, and the whole garden-like place is musical with the songs of birds, which congregate here in unusual numbers. Here was in those days, Sichem (Shechem)—now Nablous—and here by one of the large trees of the country, the terebinth[1] of Moreh, Abram pitched his tent for a temporary sojourn. We leave them in this encampment while we take a brief survey of the people among whom they had come to make their dwelling.

Of the three great families coming immediately from Noah, the Japhetic appears to have taken its course to the northward, whence it spread in various directions, giving to a large part of Asia, to Europe, and finally to America, the

[1] The word translated plain in our version means *terebinth*, the Pistacia Terebinthus of Linnæus, the Butm tree of the present natives. Robinson says of it: "It spreads its branches far and wide like a noble oak. It is not an evergreen, but its small feathered, lancet-shaped leaves fall in autumn and are renewed in the spring."

origin of their various populations. The Shemitic continued to occupy the original place of settlement along the Euphrates, whence they spread so as to occupy all the fertile region of Mesopotamia. The descendants of Ham emigrated to the westward, occupying the southern part of Arabia, Ethiopia, Egypt and Canaan; and in the immense enlargement of Japhet, as well as in the history of the other two great classes of families, we have a striking fulfilment of the prophecy of their progenitor. (Gen. ix. 25–27).

Abram, therefore, when he entered Canaan found himself among the descendants of Ham; but they seem to have been sparsely scattered, and to have been chiefly a pastoral people, though not always dwellers in tents. While occupying settled habitations, they sent out their flocks to graze as pasturage could best be found; and only two spots are mentioned where cities could be seen. One of these was at Kirjath-arba (the city of Arba, also Hebron[1]), and the other was the group of five cities, (probably small ones) at the spot where is now the southern end of the Dead Sea. Arba, after whom the former was named, had been a distinguished man among the giant race[2] belonging to that region as well as to the country east of the Jordan through which Abram had first passed. We have a record of the tribe of Amorites at this time, occupying the high grounds in and about Hebron, a warlike race, who afterward carried their arms across the Jordan and became possessors of a large region east of that river. We have also a notice at this time of the Perizzites, or, according to the meaning of their name, dwellers in plains; but the people generally went under the designation of Hittites, called so from Heth, a grandson of Noah by Canaan. The language spoken through this country had a resemblance to that of Mesopotamia, and the new party of immigrants had little difficulty in making themselves

[1] See Gen. xxiii. 2.

[2] Josh. xiv. 15.

understood among the people of the land.[1] We are struck at once, however, and throughout the history of Abram, with the manner in which he kept himself and his tribe distinct from all these dwellers in Canaan. He was courteous and sufficiently affable, and although always preserving a clear separation from them, was popular as well as respected; but he never seemed to forget that his family was in a distinct position among them and was to be kept clearly marked as such.

We see him now at Sichem (Shechem), feeling that a strange, supernatural power was surrounding him and was pointing to a most wonderful future, which, if his curiosity tempted him to peer into it, took many changing and always indistinct shapes. Here again "the Lord appeared unto Abram and said to him, 'Unto thy seed will I give this land.'" He bowed his whole soul in deep reverence; and at this place he erected an altar to יהוה הנראה, "*Jehovah beheld.*"

Removing from Shechem, he travelled twenty-five miles further to the south, and pitched his tent on an elevated spot, famous afterward as Bethel. He had now, as before, one of the finest tracts of pasturage in the whole land, remarkable still for two good fountains, and commanding an extensive view of the country. Here also he built an altar, and "called upon the name of the Lord." But the beauty of the place and its fountains and convenience for pasturage did not long detain him there. There seems to have been in him, what indeed we might expect at this time, a desire to examine the land which God had promised to his descendants; and leaving Bethel, he travelled on further toward the south, by the spot so famous long afterward as the site of the great capital, Jerusalem; along over the plains, and by the hills afterward and now distinguished as the site of

[1] A long inscription on a sarcophagus disinterred near Sidon in 1854 has such a close resemblance to the Hebrew as to cause little difficulty in reading it. The letters used on it will be noticed in another part of this work.

Bethlehem; and then still farther southwardly, looking as he went at hill and dale, and revolving in his mind the promises made and the strange mysteries of that future for which, it had been told him, he was designed.

He walked as a man would walk in a dream, and yet knowing that the dream was an actual fact and that all about him were tangible realities. But still in the dream. He was a man of too much reasoning power not to reason; and of too much practical sense not to look for actualities and to take hold of them as such. He was not given to visionary ideas and fancies; for his life shows him to have been a man of strong sense and of good common perceptions and judicious treatment of facts. And yet he was led in a way beyond his power to reason about it; and the future was all to be that which his reason could not fathom or in it find a certain standing-place for any observations or even surmisings. But he was not troubled with doubts. God had spoken; he believed; he was content in that belief.

The country as it came under his eye was fair to look upon, and the inhabitants were peaceably disposed. There was room sufficient for his flocks yet few in number, as well as for theirs; and thus he moved onward in that independent life belonging to a pastoral people, pitching his tents as choice led him over an extent of country free to all.

But gradually a change came over all the country; and the newly-arrived family, keenly attentive to every event, were by and by filled with dismay on finding not only that the beauty and attractiveness of the region were gone, but that they were themselves involved in one of the direst calamities that can anywhere befall a people. Palestine is peculiarly dependent on rains for the very existence of its inhabitants. Its large river, the Jordan, runs in a channel sunk more than a thousand feet below the general level of the country, and can afford no help for irrigation. Other streams are few and very scant in their supply; rains are

uncertain, and sometimes utterly fail; and when the latter is the case, vegetation is soon burnt up, springs and wells are dry, the soil is turned to powder, all living things begin to perish; the horrors of famine are on the land. So it was now. Abram and his family saw, with sickening feelings, the progress of a long, uninterrupted drought, the sky like brass, the sun fiery and scorching all things, vegetation dead. And soon also their own lives were in danger from the increasing famine, against which there had been no former experiences to guard them, and no time indeed for preparation. They were compelled to fly,—to fly from the "promised land" almost as soon as they had reached it; and to gain which they had travelled so far, and had given up so many comforts in their former home.

Egypt was then, as it still is, a granary for all nations far and near; and Abram, taking his family, started for at least a temporary refuge in that country, his little company carrying such feelings with them as we can very well imagine. His wife seems to have been fretful and impatient at other times when there was nothing peculiarly trying to temper; and here the circumstances would be a severe test of temper in any one. Many questions, doubtless, she had put to him in the long journey, respecting his future purposes or the reasons for present conduct, which he had found it difficult, if not impossible, to answer; for the manifestations from God had not been to the family, but to him; and all at Haran, as we know, had not believed in them. To puzzling questions he could only give, in reply, his own firmness of belief. But such reply would often savor to others more of simplicity and weakness than of strength of mind; and, at all times, would not be apt to give full satisfaction to the questioners. Still less satisfactory would his answers be under such circumstances as the present. Was his own belief indeed entirely unshaken now, as faint through insufficiency of food, and weary and thirsty, they dragged

themselves over that long waste of utterly barren country (about one hundred miles) lying between Palestine and Egypt? This region, part of the Arabian desert, was at all times perfectly dry, except during the winter rains, and it would now be peculiarly gloomy and wearisome. God might seem to some of the travellers to have quite deserted them.

CHAPTER VI.

IN EGYPT.

EGYPT was reached at last, and they breathed again; for they were amid plenty, and they were drinking the waters of the Nile, that stream from which no one even of the most favored countries ever drinks without wishing that he could drink of it through all his life. What makes its waters so delicious no one has informed us, but the fact that they are unequalled to the taste is acknowledged by every person who has ever quaffed them. The travellers now not only drank with delight, but they found a double joy in the resemblance of the country to their own native land, where the Euphrates courses along between its level, flower-decked shores. They compared with both of these the land from which they had just fled, the parched, sunburnt Canaan, where all life was perishing. Did Abram's faith, through all this, still preserve its earlier firmness and strength?

Whatever might now be his thoughts respecting his former calls to leave his early home for Canaan, he had here before him present, tangible realities for which he felt that he must be prepared. The difficulties in preparing for them were increased by the utter strangeness of all things around him, the country, the people, the wonderful architectural struc-

tures, the despotic government, the religion; all so new and much of it overwhelming to any mind. He passed along by obelisks and temples; there, before him were the Pyramids, those structures which have ever since filled the world with astonishment; he passed close by them after crossing the Nile, and by the tombs of nobles, great costly structures clustered at the Pyramids and covered with imposing sculptured forms; passed along the crowded roads filled with people of strange habits; and now, just before him was Memphis, that city so immense that to look at it might well utterly confound the dweller on the wide northern and eastern plains, the man to whom the confinement even in a single house would seem to be suffocating.

But he was forced to stop at Memphis by a terrible disaster which suddenly befell his company. His wife was taken from him, and carried to the royal palace! The beauty of Jewish women has been proverbial, from the oldest times down to our day; and Sarai, from whom they are descended, seems to have been, in looks, worthy to be the mother of such a race. "The Egyptians beheld the woman that she was very fair. The princes also of Pharaoh saw her and commended her before Pharaoh; and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house."

We come now to an event that must be felt to be a dark blot on the life of Abram himself. He had, from the time of leaving Ur, foreseen that wherever they might go, Sarai's great beauty would attract attention, and might, in those lawless countries, cause danger to himself; and he had induced her to unite with him in a purpose of joint deception in case of difficulties. He was to declare her to be his sister, and she was to call him her brother; both of which were terms indeed true as regarded that relationship, but false as regarded the purpose designed, which was to conceal their relation as man and wife.

It is most painful to know that he, whom we would fain

have considered a great and thoroughly good man, and whom we would wish to make a hero, was false to honor and truth—that he was guilty of lying; for such was indeed the act which we are now considering. The act was false and base; and was doubly mean, because it was a meanness toward a woman, and that woman his wife.

The Arabs to this day are peculiarly given to lying. Travellers say that, when a bargain is made with them, they are strict in fulfilling it, and that property confided to them is safe even to the minutest item, however it may be exposed; but in bargaining they set truth utterly at defiance; and in their general intercourse, have little hesitation in violating it, even when nothing is gained to them by the act. Probably the nomadic life, having in it none of the pressure of close communities, where truth is felt to be most essential to the existence of society, may be productive of such a license to the tongue. Even stealing, in some communities, has been considered not only allowable, but praiseworthy, if not detected; but honesty and truth always have their foundations in righteousness itself, and are not dependent on any usages of society.

We yield up Abram, therefore, from any unqualified approbation, and recognize in him not a hero in history, but a weak and sinning man, even mean and base in this sin. God had taken him, not because he was perfect, but because he had a great purpose to accomplish through him. There was no perfect man to be taken. There has been, in all time, only One Perfect Being on the earth, Teacher and Saviour and God himself. We leave this blot on Abram as we find it in the Scriptures; and feel its prominence to be the more striking in consequence of his other traits, which must commend themselves to us,—his simplicity of character, his gentleness, his singleness of adherence to God, his implicit yielding of his own will to God's will. With all manliness in intellect he was simple as a child. In this instance he

was a coward; yet in another case, yet to be seen, he was brave and bold, where he might easily have shrunk from danger and have pleaded the overwhelming multiplicity of the foes he so courageously pursued and fought.

If it should be asked here, how he who was so marked of heaven and called of God *could* have fallen into such a sin as that which we are now contemplating, we will remember that men, even if favored as Abram was, had in those times very few means of studying duty or of gaining intelligence, or of strengthening their logical perceptions of right. Of books there were very few in existence, and these were confined in circulation. Among nomads probably there were none at all. Oral traditions of events and genealogies of families could convey very few principles for men's action, and few clear teachings of what was right. As respected what was right in principle or practice men had to feel their way slowly; and even long afterward, in enlightened Greece and Rome, people often groped blindly and failed to receive the truth. In Sparta, as just noticed, stealing was commendable, if the theft was concealed; only discovery brought condemnation and shame to the perpetrator.

In the case of Abram, the divine protection was now interposed to save him and his wife from the consequences of their sin. When a woman was received as she had been, in the house of an Eastern prince, it was customary to make her undergo certain purifications before her adoption as wife; and previous to the completion of them in this instance, the monarch found his household visited with "plagues" of some kind or other, made sufficient to reveal to him the truth. Abram had in the mean time been enriched, for her sake, with very many gifts such as in pastoral life would be most valued, including camels, and also with men-servants and maid-servants. He was now sent for by the monarch, and upbraided with his base conduct; and then, husband and wife were dismissed, the gifts being still allowed to remain

in their possession. Thus ended an event discreditable to both of them, and especially so to him.

We must here take notice of a very singular episode in the history of Egypt itself; for the subject comes before us in the questions, who was this Pharaoh, and why was the treatment to Abram, a shepherd, so different from that given to the descendants and followers of his grandson Jacob, also shepherds, who had to be put in a separate corner of the kingdom, because, as they were informed, "every shepherd is an abomination to the Egyptians?" This contempt for shepherds is also shown in numerous places on the monuments of Egypt, where people in that employment are represented as lame or deformed, dirty, unshaven and even of a ludicrous appearance, and often clad with the matting similar in quality to the covering thrown over the backs of the oxen they are tending.[1] Some of these sculptures are on the tombs at the bases of the Pyramids, and may have been seen by Abram himself as he passed by, for those tombs belong to periods antecedent to his time. The honor with which he, a shepherd, was received and treated may have been owning to Sarai, but seems scarcely to be accounted for in that manner; and so especially the nature of the presents given,—royal gifts presented to him, consisting chiefly of sheep and oxen. When Joseph's brethren came into Egypt, Joseph was the highest authority in the land next to the king, yet he was compelled by the Egyptian scorn for shepherds to give them a region where they would not feel this hatred and contempt.

There seems to have been a difference between the people of Egypt in these two periods of time; and it is in perfect accordance with what we know of two very different epochs in that country;—one, a rulership by *shepherd kings*, and another, the government by native Egyptian kings.

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[1] See Wilkinson's "Ancient Egyptians."

The fact of the coming into that country in the very ancient times of a numerous race of shepherds, of the conquest of the country by them, and of their rule over it for several centuries, is admitted by all Egyptologists, although some difference of opinion exists as to the period and the time of this occupancy. The circumstance of such occupancy is, indeed, quite unnoticed on the monuments, which record only events honorable to the country or to the sovereign by whom they were erected; but we arrive at a knowledge of it partly by perceptible gaps among the events there recorded, and fully and satisfactorily in the history and the lists of sovereigns by Manetho, who was a high priest of the temple of Isis at Sebenytus in Lower Egypt in the reign of the first Ptolemy (322 to 284 B. C.) "Although," says Lepsius, "his history is lost, we have his dynasties tolerably entire. His excellence as a historian is placed in the clearest light by the monuments which are now made accessible to us, and the notices concerning him transmitted to us by the Greek and Latin authors are in no respects contradictory. The lists of Manetho comprise thirty dynasties." His own works have perished, but nearly his entire lists of sovereigns are preserved in the writings of Eusebius, Julius Africanus, in part by Josephus; and a portion of his Egyptian history is transmitted to us by Josephus. The last is the more fully reliable, because it is quoted literally by that writer in his controversy with Apion; and Apion, born in Oasis, in Egypt, and having his home afterward at Alexandria, was the author of a learned treatise on the antiquities of Egypt, and was hostile to the Jews. Anything quoted by Josephus, in a controversy with him, would consequently have to be given with great care and accuracy; and we are therefore able to make extracts with confidence from his history so given.

Manetho says, "There was a king of ours whose name was Timaus. Under him it came to pass, I know not how,

that God was averse to us, and there came, after a surprising manner, men of ignoble birth out of the eastern parts, and had boldness enough to make an expedition into our country, and with ease subdued it by force, yet without our hazarding a battle with them. So when they had gotten those that governed us under their power, they afterward burnt down our cities and demolished the temples of the gods, and used all the inhabitants after a most barbarous manner; nay, some they slew, and led their children and wives into slavery. At length they made one of themselves king, whose name was Salatis; he also lived at Memphis, and made both the upper and lower regions pay tribute, and left garrisons in places that were most proper for them. He chiefly aimed to secure the eastern parts, as foreseeing that the Assyrians, who had then the greatest power, would be desirous of that kingdom and invade them, and as he found in the Saite Nomos, a city very proper for his purpose, and which lay upon the Bubastic channel, but with regard to a certain theologic notion was called Avaris,[1] this he rebuilt and made very strong by the walls he built about it, and by a most numerous garrison of two hundred and forty thousand armed men whom he put into it to keep it." [The names of his six successors, all of whom were occupied in completing the subjugation of the country are next given.] "This whole nation was styled Hyksos, that is Shepherd-kings; for the first syllable Hyc, according to the sacred dialect, denotes *a king*, as is Sos *a shepherd*, but this according to the ordinary dialect; and of these is compounded Hyksos; but some people say that these people were Arabians. These people," Manetho proceeds to say, "kept possession of Egypt five hundred and eleven[2] years;" and he adds that, finally, "the kings of Thebais and of the other parts of

[1] Supposed to have been where Pelusium was afterward built.

[2] Bunsen estimates the time at nine hundred and twenty-two years.

Egypt made an insurrection against the shepherds," and that "a terrible and long war was made between them." At last the strangers were driven out of all parts of the country except the fortified place, Avaris, "which contained ten thousand acres," and where they were besieged by four hundred and eighty thousand men headed by Thummosis, son of the Egyptian king, who, in despair of taking the place, "came to a composition with them that they should leave Egypt and go without any harm to be done them, whithersoever they would; and after this composition was made they went away with their whole families and effects, not fewer in number than two hundred and forty thousand, and took their journey from Egypt through the wilderness for Syria;" and he proceeds then to say that "they went northward and built Jerusalem."[1]

Indeed, it is probable that long before their final expulsion, branches of this restless, roving set of people had scattered northwardly along the eastern shores of the Mediterranean, carrying with them from Egypt the germs of many useful ideas, which we shall have a future occasion to notice, and which, through Phœnicia to Greece, have come even over to our own country. They probably formed the race of Philistines in Canaan; for in the languages of Western Asia, whence they originally came, *Pali* means *shepherds* and *Stan* or *Sthan* signifies *land*, and *Palistan*, whence Philistines, means the *Land of Shepherds*, the *Hyksos* of the Egyptian language. From this comes our word *Palestine*.

The easterly origin of the shepherd-kings of Egypt appears to receive a singular elucidation in the sacred books of the Hindoos, which record two migrations from the East in remote times; first of the Yadavas or sacred race, and secondly of the Pali or shepherds, called Pali-putras in those annals (Pali-bothri in Pliny). The last, we are informed

[1] Jos. Con. Ap. §14.

by these Hindoo records, were a powerful race, occupying the country between the Indus and mouth of the Ganges, whence, with the roving habits of a pastoral people, they spread over a great part of Asia, Africa and Europe. A portion of them, crossing the Persian Gulf and spreading through Arabia Felix, reached the Red Sea, crossing which they occupied a region on its western shore called in the Grecian histories Barbaria, from the word *Berber*, a shepherd. Traces of these early rovers are said by Bruce to be found as a distinct race in Abyssinia, different in appearance from the other inhabitants, and still a pastoral people, living in tents and leading a roving life. They seem to have been the Eastern Ethiopians, as distinct from the Western noticed in Herodotus and Homer.

We shall in a future chapter of the present work endeavor to settle the period of this expulsion of the Hyksos from Egypt; and if the chronology we shall there trace out be correct, then the time of Abram's visit to Egypt was at the latter part of their dominion,[1] when, by long residence, they had changed greatly from their primitive habits and had become Egyptianized in character and civilization, while still retaining their old shepherd proclivities; exactly as the Mongolian conquerors and rulers of China, a shepherd race, present themselves in our own time greatly changed and softened by the influence of their subjects.

This will account for the treatment which Abram received, and the nature of the gifts presented to him; and as the expulsion of the Hyksos and restoration of the Egyptian power occurred before Jacob came to that country, it will explain the grandeur in the new dynasties amid which Joseph's glory shone out, and the fact of the hatred toward the

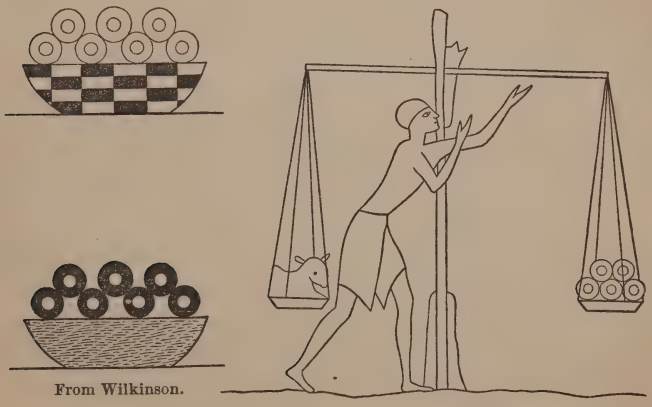
[1] Modern writers on the monuments and history of Egypt differ greatly as respects chronology, according as they make dynasties successive or in part simultaneous; but almost all of them agree in making Abram's visit to have been during the time of the shepherd-kings.

pastoral race, in consequence of which the Hebrews had to be isolated in a corner of the kingdom, because "every shepherd is an abomination unto the Egyptians."

CHAPTER VII.

IN PALESTINE.

IT was a greatly enlarged party which followed the Hebrew chief as he left Egypt and took his course backward toward Canaan; for now "Abram was very rich in cattle and silver and in gold." The monarch had bestowed upon him "sheep and oxen and he-asses, and men-servants and maid-servants, and she-asses and camels," and at the last, also royal gifts from his treasury.[1] The gifts were indeed made in kingly style.



From Wilkinson. From Lepsius.

Egyptian Money, as represented on the Monuments; the White is Silver, the Black is Gold: also, a Man Weighing Money.

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[1] See Gen. xiii. 2. Money among the Egyptians at that time consisted of rings of gold and silver, and there were public weighers whose business

Attractive as Egypt was to him and his party, it was still not to be his permanent home; for the divine admonitions had designated Canaan as the country for this purpose; and therefore, when the famine had passed, and grass for his flocks was to be had, he crossed again the wide intervening desert region; and then, having still advanced northwardly, stopped once more on the heights of Bethel, where he had formerly halted on his journey and had built an altar. And here once more he "called on the name of the Lord."

Lot was still with him, and had also increased in pastoral wealth; and here now, both his uncle and himself, even in these wide abundant pastures, were feeling the customary effects of prosperity and riches. Their herdsmen were having contentions and were bringing in complaints, which threatened to disturb the harmony among the chiefs themselves; and Abram came to the unwelcome conclusion that

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it was to see that the weight was just. None of this money has been found among the antiquities of that country, but on their monuments are figures representing both the gold and silver currency, the latter being styled in the accompanying hieroglyphics "white gold." Silver appears to have been chiefly in use for the purpose of ornament. Egypt had no coined money till it was introduced by the Persians after their conquest of that country; nor have any such pieces, of times previous to the Persian rule, been discovered in Phœnicia, although this might have been expected (if at any place) in a commercial country like the last. The first coined money (*i. e.* with an *impression* on it) known is that of the Lydian kings and of Egina, about the eighth century B. C. The first absolutely Jewish coin was in the time of Simon Maccabeus, B. C. 139; obverse, *Shekel Israel;* reverse, *Jerusalem Kedoshah* (the holy).

This notice respecting Abram is the first we have in the Bible of the use of the precious metals. That may signify bullion, but more probably it was the ring money or some other settled form of exchange. In Gen. xvii. 13 and xxiii. 16, xx. 16, the reference seems to be clearly to some known form; and in Gen. xxxvii. 25, 28, to one recognized from Gilead to Egypt. In Gen. xlii. 35, the expression is *bundles of money;* and in xliii. 21, it was said to be "in full weight," probably rings of silver which could be estimated separately or in the gross by weight. See "Madden's Hist. of Jewish Coinage."

he and his nephew must separate; for "the land was not able to bear them, that they might dwell together: for their substance was so great that they could not dwell together." He was very generous in his proposal to Lot, when it had become painfully evident that they must part. "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen: for we be brethren," was his conciliatory language. He then offered to his kinsman the choice of the whole country. If Lot should choose the right hand, he would go to the left; if the left hand, he would go to the right.

The spot where they stood commanded an extensive prospect, and especially down into a region that might very well attract the preference of Lot and his party, so recently from Egypt. For just below them was the valley of the Jordan, with a climate which through long subsequent ages was proverbial as *Egyptian*, and also a plain which was afterward, and doubtless then also, famous for its tropical palm trees, and a soil well watered and remarkable for its fertility. It was bringing Egypt, so pleasant in its associations, once more close to his side. Fatally for himself, Lot chose this place.

The whole valley of the Jordan and its lakes is a very singular one. It looks as if by some convulsion in the earth a long chasm had been made, commencing near the foot of Hebron, and deepening southwardly till the waters at the lake of Tiberias are six hundred and twenty-two feet below the level of the Mediterranean; whence again this chasm goes on deepening rapidly, till finally the surface of the Dead Sea is thirteen hundred and twelve feet below the Mediterranean level. This convulsion doubtless occurred long before Abram's time; but the rocks of that region show a volcanic origin; and volcanoes to this day heave and disturb the land.

The place where Abram and Lot were standing at Bethel is about twenty-eight hundred feet above the Mediterranean

level, and the plain of Jericho, only four miles distant, was about thirty-nine hundred feet below them. A wady or glen at their side led down to the plain, and opened on it at a spot where a fountain sufficient to turn mills still gushes from the earth. The whole plain is to this day watered to an unusual degree by large fountains. Its soil has always been famous for its fertility and the place remarkable for the tropical nature of its productions. Directly at the south of it is the Dead Sea, a body of water forty-six statute miles long by nine and a half in its widest part, its greatest depth being thirteen hundred feet. Twenty-seven miles from its northern end, however, the sea is narrowed by a low, flat promontory extending from the mountains at its eastern side, so as to be here only from three to five miles wide, with a depth so greatly diminished that it can be forded at certain seasons of the year. On its western side, bare, rugged hills rise abruptly from the sea, and are the beginning of a district some twelve or fifteen miles in width, looking, says the traveller Maundrell, "As if the earth had suffered some great convulsion in which the very bowels had been turned outward." On the east, mountains rise to a height of two or three thousand feet, and are seamed by ravines down which streams descend, giving fertility to their sides. At the southern end of this sea commences the Wady Arabah, eight or ten miles wide, at first low and marshy, then higher, and so passing off southwardly, with high mountains on either side, to the gulf of Akabah, the eastern arm of the Red Sea. At the southwestern edge of the Dead Sea is a ridge of pure salt, four miles long by one hundred and fifty feet in height, and at the northern end of this ridge comes in, from the west, Wady Mahawat, the sides of which at the present day give intimations of the manner in which the great catastrophe to this region was produced soon after the separation between Abram and Lot. A recent traveller says, "There are exposed on the sides of the wady, and chiefly on

the south, large masses of bitumen mingled with gravel. These overlie a thin stratum of sulphur, which again overlies a thicker stratum of sand, so strongly impregnated with sulphur that it yields powerful fumes on being sprinkled over a hot coal. Many great blocks of bitumen have been washed down the gorge, and lie scattered over the plain below, along with huge boulders and other traces of tremendous floods. . . . . The layer of sulphurous sand is generally evenly distributed on the old limestone base, the sulphur evenly above it and the bitumen in variable masses. In every way it differs from the ordinary mode of deposit of these substances, as we have seen them elsewhere. Again, the bitumen, unlike that which we pick up on the shore, is strongly impregnated with sulphur, and yields an overpowering sulphurous odor; above all it is calcined, and bears the marks of having been subjected to extreme heat. In weight and appearance it differs from the bitumen on the shore, as coke does from ordinary coal."[1]

The bitumen on the seashore above referred to is cast up from the sea after the earthquakes to which the place is subject, and sometimes comes in very large masses; it is doubtless the consolidated matter from bituminous springs below after their fluids have escaped into the sea. The ancients describe the quantity of this floating asphaltum as even greater than at the present time. The water of this sea is exceedingly nauseous and bitter:[2] no living thing can exist in it. The specific gravity is 1.1823, so great that the human body cannot sink in it. Notwithstanding the large quantity of fresh water poured into it by the Jordan, its

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[1] Tristram's "Land of Israel."

[2] An analysis by Prof. F. A. Genth of some brought home by Prof. Osborn gave—

Chloride of Sodium	7.5839	Bromide of Magnesium	0.5341
do Calcium	2.8988	Sulphate of Lime	0.0901
do Magnesium	10.1636	Carbonate of Lime	0.0042
do Potassium	1.0087		

nauseous qualities remain the same, the evaporation being equal to the supply by the river.

Where is now this shoal part of the sea, nineteen miles in length, was formerly land, making, with the low promontory yet there, the vale of Siddim; and here were, in Abram's time, five cities, none of them, however, probably very large. The inhabitants were no doubt attracted to the place by the warmth of the climate, like that at Jericho, and by the facilities for irrigation afforded by the streams from the neighboring mountains on the east; for Robinson remarks, "Even at the present day more living streams flow into the Ghor [Depression] at the southern end of the sea from the wadys of the eastern mountains than are to be found so near together in all Palestine; and the tract, though now mostly desert, is still better watered through these streams and by many fountains than any other district through the whole country." The inhabitants in the extreme heat would find a pleasant retreat on the adjoining mountains, made so inviting by these streams, and which were also so well adapted to afford pasturage for their flocks. But this vale of Siddim, as the Scriptures inform us, was full of slime [literally, bitumen] pits,[1] and the soil, as we see, was full of sulphur mixed with bitumen; bitumen was also probably employed, as in Mugeyer, for cement in their houses; and the whole place had therefore a most inflammable character.

Abram and Lot separated on these heights at Bethel. Four hundred and thirty years afterward their descendants, having become two distinct nations, were to meet east of the Dead Sea, and those from Lot were to do the others a grievous wrong. At present the nephew descended, probably by the adjoining wady, Dûk, to the plain of Jericho, whence he passed on to the vale of Siddim, where he made his residence in one of the cities, pasturing his flocks on the sides of the adjoining mountains.

[1] Gen. xiv. 10.

Abram had, at Bethel, another supernatural manifestation, with a direction to look all around him, north, south, east and west; "for all the land which thou seest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed for ever." But he was childless. His tent had none of the ringing joyfulness of young voices, and he now must have felt doubly his loneliness—cut off altogether from kinsmen,—his nephew, the last of them, having just removed from him. His was indeed a very strange life, invested as it was with such a mysterious atmosphere, in which he heard intelligible sounds of promise, and through which "dim obscure" he was bid to see his posterity, in the far remote future, countless in number "as the dust of the earth." No wonder if he felt in a stupor of wonder and awe and hope—perhaps at times also of fear.

This region at Bethel had now painful associations with it, in consequence of the difficulties about the herdsmen and the separation; and he left the place, and went with his still large body of retainers again toward the south.

Twenty-seven miles in that direction was a rich tract of table land, which is to this day famous for its beauty and fertility, and of which travellers always speak in terms of the warmest enthusiasm. It owes its greenness and richness of verdure perhaps to the high elevation; for it is twenty-eight hundred feet above the level of the Mediterranean, thirty-five miles distant, a view of which it commands, with also that of Kerak, a city on the mountain-side east of the Dead Sea. The mountains of Edom are also seen as far south as Mount Hor. A wady, or broad, shallow valley indents the table land from the north, and then, turning S.S.E. and deepening and narrowing, makes place for a city which existed in Abram's time, and dated back beyond Zoan, or Tanis, in Egypt, the latter now an extent of ruins, while this city in Palestine has continued to flourish and to be a favorite as in the ancient days. The hills around it are still

famous for their grapes and wine, and are the place from which the grapes of Eshcol were taken by the spies sent by Moses, long after this, to examine the land.

The city we are speaking of is Hebron, called also Mamre, and sometimes Kirjath-arba, from its founder Arba, of the race of giants. In the days of Abram, the region was in the occupancy of three brothers, Eshcol, Aner and Mamre, with whom he entered into friendly relations, as he quietly settled down there for a temporary home. It was indeed a charming country, where his flocks could find abundance of pasturage and water, and where trees of widespread foliage offered their shade. These latter were even then considered worthy of record,[1] and Robinson speaks of one of the same species at this place, an oak, by which he encamped, having a trunk seven feet in diameter and a circumference of foliage of about two hundred and sixty feet.

But, while living here and enjoying the comforts of his new residence and the feeling of quiet after so many removals, the Hebrew leader was one day startled by news brought in great haste from the vale of Siddim, where, as he knew, Lot had chosen his residence.

The events of thirty-eight hundred years ago seem much like those of yesterday, as we may see in the second chapter of our book, where the present habits and acts of people in those Eastern countries bear close resemblance to what we find in the Scriptures; in both cases, the population made up of distinct tribes, with little adhesion to places; and those tribes, either singly or combined, making raids on other tribes for the pleasure of excitement or for plunder, or both, incited to it and rewarded by bardic strains or by the eyes of women. The king Chedorlaomer, whose name appears to be on the cylinder so recently discovered at Mugeyer, had formerly subdued the princes of the five towns

[1] See Gen. xxvii. 17.

in Siddim, and for twelve years they had been subject to his rule. Then they rebelled, and a year afterward came that monarch with three adjunct kings, plundering the whole region from a little south of Damascus down toward Mount Hor, a distance of one hundred and eighty miles. The rebellious citizens in Siddim would assuredly have fared even worse than the others; and their chiefs, in desperation, gave battle to the conquerors. But they were defeated; the cities were plundered, and Lot and his family were carried off, destined undoubtedly for slavery.

This was the startling news brought to Abram on the plains of Mamre; and it not only roused him up, but effected in him, for the time, an entire transformation. He who had been fearful in Egypt for his life, was at once changed into a hero. He got the three chiefs at Mamre to join him; armed from his own tribe three hundred and eighteen warriors; pursued the invaders as far north as near the foot of Hermon; divided his party so as to make a night attack in two separate bands; and in the sudden alarm occasioned, and in the darkness, was victorious. The flying hosts of invaders were pursued upward toward Damascus; and then the victors, collecting the plunder that had been carried off, and the captive women and children,—Lot and his family among them,—returned toward Mamre.

The whole history reads as if it might have been in our own time; as we have before us the patriarch, like a true Arab sheikh, easily fired up; and him who had lately, in Arab style, told a lie through cowardice, now made a hero under strong and generous impulse; also of the straggling flight of loosely-cohering people, leaving their plunder as they fled; and lastly the strangely-mixed nature of the Hebrew chief, as we still see it in Arab sheikhs; for Abram, who readily accepted gifts from Pharaoh, though they were the price of shame and filled with disgraceful remembrances, now, on his way back, utterly refused any part of the

recaptured goods. All were proffered to him, but with an oath seemingly uncalled for (in this too, like an Arab, for no people abound so much in oaths as they), he declared to one of the rescued kings offering them, "I will not take from a thread even to a shoe [sandal] latchet. I will not take anything that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich." With regard to the booty, he allowed only that his three confederates should have their share.

On his way back he was met at Salem, near what was afterward Jerusalem, by Melchizedek, "a priest of the most high God," who presented to him refreshments and gave his blessing, and to whom he offered gifts. There is much obscurity about this man, who seems to have been, according to the custom of those times, the priest as well as the ruler of his people, and who appears to have held to a knowledge of the Most High. We shall see, when in another chapter we come to look at the religion of the Egyptians, that the idea of a Supreme Being was not quite lost, though often designedly mixed up with fables and purposely hid from the multitudes. It must have been cheering to the Hebrew stranger in Canaan to meet such a recognition of his faith in this isolated case, and he gave to Melchizedek "tithes of all."

He himself returned to his tents at Hebron, and continued on in his quiet pastoral life. His circumstances were flourishing, his flocks increasing, his own people and his neighbors kind; the late warlike events had given him a high position for bravery and energy in action, and for sound practical sense. He was respected and loved; but still there was a canker at his heart. He was childless. Very strange to him, in such a condition of life, sounded all those divine assurances of future greatness and wealth to his posterity; for many years had passed over his childless home, and he and his wife were already becoming old. The strangeness of the mysteries about him made him sensitive

and anxious and restless; the questions put by others respecting his expectations and the divine manifestations must still have greatly perplexed him; he was perplexed even by the divine assurances; and now, when another of them came to him, "Fear not, Abram; I am thy shield and thy exceeding great reward," his perplexity took words and spoke out in anxious inquiries. In return he was bid to go out of his tent—it was at night—and look up: "Tell the stars, if thou be able to number them; so shall thy seed be." He bowed his head humbly and meekly; it was the divine word; he believed the Lord; and it was "counted to him for righteousness." Simple as a child he was, this man, just so bold in battle, so manly in his bearing after the victory, so strong in all practical sense, yet when God spake to him, simple and full of trust. The extreme *singleness* of his life in this matter of trust in God is his high claim to greatness, and fully entitles him to the title he still bears all over that country, "El Khalil," *the friend of God.* As we look at that singleness, we do not wonder at the distinction put upon him by the Deity, who had through him the greatest of purposes to accomplish.

We are to record now an event which may have given rise to a custom generally prevalent afterward among the Gentiles as well as Jews, or which more probably was in accordance with the custom already existing, and which had a powerful significance. This custom, as we find it in the ancient authors, was, when a covenant was to be made, for the contracting parties to procure an animal for sacrifice; to separate it longitudinally exactly into halves; to place them opposite to each other; and for the contracting parties to pass between them, either meeting in the middle, and there confirming the contract, or doing so immediately afterward. It was the most solemn form of contracting, and had significance not only from the shedding of blood, but from the cutting in two of the body, as if meaning that the

violator of the contract was to be treated in a similar manner. It seems to be referred to in Matt. xxiv. 51; Luke xii. 46; Jer. xxxiv. 18, 19, 20, and in some other passages in Scripture. According to Herodotus, Xerxes ordered one of the sons of Pytheus to be cut in two, and half to be placed on each side of the way, that his army might pass between them—an act seemingly in consequence of an offer and a request made by the father.

On the present occasion Abram was directed by the divine communication to provide certain animals as if for such a solemn covenant-making, one that would be open to his outward perceptions and be a demonstration clear to all his senses and clearly impressed upon his mind. He accordingly selected a heifer, a goat and a ram, and a dove and pigeon; and dividing all but the fowls into halves, laid them against each other. It was an act that would require assistance and attract attention, and the circumstances may all indeed have been designed to operate on the feelings of questioners around him and to be a demonstration to others as well as to himself. We can imagine them, standing at a respectful distance, earnest, curious, watchful, and filled with awe and perhaps fear. He himself remained near the bodies; and "when the sun was going down, a deep sleep fell upon Abram, and lo, a horror of great darkness fell upon him." The divine communication now again gave him knowledge of the future with reference both to himself and his descendants, and also to other nations. Then it is added, "And it came to pass, that when the sun went down, and it was dark, behold, a smoking furnace and a burning lamp that passed between those pieces," and a covenant was made with him by heaven, by which his posterity were to have inheritance of those lands.

CHAPTER VIII.

IN SOUTHERN PALESTINE.

TROUBLE came into Abram's tent. We have seen, in the second chapter of this work, how under the system of concubinage or secondary wives allowed in that country, dissensions almost necessarily arise; and the beautiful but arbitrary Amsha there exhibited seems to have had a full exemplar in Sarai, Abram's wife. In the feeling of chagrin in the latter at having no children, and her desire for an heir to Abram, she persuaded him to take her servant Hagar, an Egyptian, as concubine, which was done; but as soon as her scheme for an heir promised to be successful, a strong jealousy took possession of Sarai's heart. This had some apology in the feeling of contempt which the Egyptian woman had very soon begun to manifest toward her mistress, and the hope doubtless that she would supplant the latter in the affections of the master. Soon, the mistress, indignant and wrathful, and using language as if she thought he was himself to blame, ended a complaint to him about her wrongs with the stinging purposed malediction, "The Lord judge between me and thee." He sought peace by telling his wife to have her own way on the subject; and the consequence was such treatment by the mistress that the concubine, in a passion of vexation and rage, fled from the tent.

She wandered off, leaving a dull, heavy, fearful calm behind; and particularly the master's heart was saddened at the thought that the child that might be born to him would be an outcast on the world. Passion gives speed to motion; and the woman, with no wish to linger around such a tent, had gone into the wide desert on the south, where in soli-

tude she would be able to vent her griefs. She had travelled about two days' journey to the southeastward, and had sat down by a fountain, yet brooding over her troubles, but with her wrath now mollified or dissipated by fatigue and suffering; her dark Egyptian face showing the gloomy feelings in her heart. Suddenly she heard her name called, and with an impressive adjunctive signifying her true position in life. "Hagar, Sarai's maid," the voice said, "whence camest thou? and whither wilt thou go?" It was from an angel now made evident to her sight; and after hearing her reply, he bade her return and be submissive to her mistress. He added that the child who should be born must be called Ishmael, *God hears*, as a remembrance to her and others that God had heard her in her affliction; moreover, that he should be a wild man,—"his hand against every man and every man's hand against him;" but that he would maintain his own against all enemies, and that his descendants would be too numerous for computation.

She returned to her mistress, and her child in due time was named according to the direction of the angel.

From Ishmael have come the Arabs. The record of this prophecy here made of them dates back thirty-eight hundred and thirty-nine years; and how true the prophecy has been, and still continues to be before our own eyes! "Many potentates among the Abyssinians, Persians, Egyptians and Turks have endeavored to subjugate the wandering and wild Arabs; but though they have had temporary triumphs, they have been ultimately unsuccessful. Sesostris, Cyrus, Pompey and Trajan all endeavored to conquer Arabia, but in vain. From the beginning to the present day they have maintained their independence."

Thirteen additional years passed over Abram's family, still remaining in the fertile region in the neighborhood of Hebron. The child had grown into an active lad, making the tent more cheerful by his boyish glee, into which, however,

his mother had insinuated some of the spirit from her own sufferings, and over all which the jealousy of Sarai kept watch, especially as she saw the boy twining himself thoroughly among the affections of the father.

The surroundings of Abram in this country, where he stood alone amid the wide sweep of idolatry,—indeed we may say alone in the world, in which his single heart had scarcely any human aid in its fidelity to God,—made it necessary that the heavenly visitations to him should come again and again, in order to impress and to strengthen him, and to make him feel continuously that he was divinely sustained. We must again recall the great difference between his position in the world from that of believers now. Knowledge of God was far different then from what it is at present. Of general enlightenment there was but little. Men's reasoning faculties had not the acuteness and the grasp which they have reached in these times. There were fewer premises from which to start for any right conclusions. Most of what to us now is vastly lengthened history, with its markings of God's over-ruling hand, and his punitive or rewarding decisions, was to them an unknown future. Upon their past that almighty Power had been indeed most strongly and visibly impressed, but the power on the mind even from such impressions fades in time, and when transmitted only by oral narratives becomes vague and uncertain. Egypt, the most highly cultivated nation of that period, was grossly idolatrous, in an idolatry which even now confounds the intellects of scholars. Canaan was idolatrous. One little spot, we may say in all the world, remained as a testimony for God, and only one man in that spot, for we may well believe that he had little sympathy in his fidelity either within his tent or without.

God came to him now again with sustaining words. The heavenly message was adapted to the time, the man and the circumstances in which he was placed. His name, according

to the direction, was to be no longer Abram, which means "*high father*," but Abraham, signifying, as far as we can understand it, "*father of a multitude.*" His wife Sarai, "*my princess*," was to be named Sarah, simply "*princess;*" for the promise was now given that in a year she should bear him a son, from whom should come nations and kings and many people. The old man's heart, even in the gladness and glory of this announcement, turned immediately with the jealousy of strong and true affection toward the stripling in his tent; as if frightened, lest, in the glory of the promised heir, the other should be quite lost; and he exclaimed, "Oh that Ishmael might live before thee!" He was reassured, by promises that twelve princes and a great nation should proceed from Ishmael.

In this visitation a rite symbolical of purity of heart[1] was enjoined upon him and every male in his family, to be observed as a continued token of the covenant between heaven and himself and his descendants. The injunction was obeyed, and the rite has continued to be one of the characteristics of the Arabs and Jews to the present time.

Soon after this, as he was sitting one day, during the heat of noontide, at the opening of his tent, he saw three strangers approaching. Immediately, in a manner as if it might indeed be an Arab's invitation to hospitality of the present day, he rose and urged them to enter and partake of refreshments. They did so, and the entertainment following seems as if it might have been but yesterday, so clearly is the scene defined before us, and so greatly resembling what a traveller may now witness on similar occasions in that land. He "hastened into the tent unto Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, and knead it and bake cakes upon the hearth. And Abraham ran unto the herd and fetched a calf, and gave it unto a young man;

[1] See in connection with Gen. xvii., also Deut. xxx. 6; Jer. iv. 4; Rom. iv. 11; Col. ii. 11.

and he hastened to dress it. And he took butter and milk,[1] and the calf which he had dressed and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they did eat." They were three heavenly visitants, and they repeated now the promise of an heir by Sarah his wife. As they were departing he accompanied them part of the way, which was toward the east; and they revealed to him the purpose of heaven to destroy the cities where Lot was staying, in consequence of the abominable wickedness of their inhabitants. He pleaded that the righteous would in that case perish with the wicked; and was finally promised that if only ten righteous men could be found there, the cities should be spared for their sakes. So the angels proceeded on their way.

But there were not even that redeeming number. On the morrow, as at a very early hour he stood by his tent and looked eastward, he saw a dense smoke rise up and overcloud all the heavens: the cities were consumed except a small one called Zoar, for which Lot had interceded as a place of refuge for himself and family. The ground in this region, as already noticed, was full of pits of bitumen, which, aided by fire from heaven and sulphurous vapor, consumed all but the one city. This appears to have stood on the promontory which now juts out at the southeast side of the Dead Sea, and where foundations of buildings are still said to exist. This terrible catastrophe was no doubt a miraculous visitation as a punishment for the sins of these people; but was probably aided by natural means, which may have been an earthquake, such as has lately shattered Tiberias and quite destroyed Safed, two cities not far north of this; and also by the bitumen and sulphur for which this spot is still remarkable, as already described. The shoal part, nineteen miles long, at the southern end of the sea, doubtless shows where the four destroyed cities stood.

[1] The Hebrew says חלב, Halab, doubtless the leaven or sour curds, as we see now in constant use among the Arabs and Turks.

Lot and his two daughters, through the guidance of the angels, escaped to Zoar. His wife "looked back from behind him, and she became a pillar of salt:" the hill of salt, still existing there, bears witness to this catastrophe.

Abraham himself soon after this moved his tents and flocks from Hebron to a region farther to the west. A district of country lying along the Mediterranean and extending some distance inland, was occupied by the Philistines, doubtless an offshoot of the *Pali* or Shepherd-race which we have already noticed as occupying Egypt after their migration from the distant East. Abimelech was sheikh or king of the Philistines, and had his chief residence at Gerar, near to where Gaza is at present, from which his tribe were scattered about as their flocks had need of pasturage. South of them was the sandy region, extending to the borders of Egypt. Abraham and Abimelech were on friendly terms, but the former, for the same reason as in Egypt, repeated the mean wickedness that he had been guilty of in that country, and lied to Abimelech respecting his wife Sarah, declaring that she was his sister. The result was the same as in the former case: the woman was protected by heavenly interference most undeserved, as respects both herself and husband. Abimelech, on learning the connexion between the two, upbraided him with his deception; to which he gave the same lame response as before, that she was his half-sister as well as wife. The king of Gerar presented him with sheep and oxen and servants, and a thousand pieces of silver, and said to Sarah, respecting her husband: "Behold he is to thee a covering of the eyes unto all that are with thee, and with all other: thus she was reproved."

CHAPTER IX.

AN HEIR GIVEN.

"LAUGHTER!" That was the meaning of the word Isaac, the name given by heavenly direction to the child which Sarah, soon after the above event, presented to Abraham. Her own son! and as the two parents contemplated the heir so long hoped for, and now the child of their old age, what visions of future brightness and glory must have risen before their minds in consequence of the many promises from God with which it had been heralded. Both father and mother had laughed inwardly in glee when the announcement of such a coming event had been made to them; and now the mother exclaimed, "God hath made me to laugh, so that all that hear will laugh with me." The child was therefore rightly named Isaac, "*Laughter;*" and a brightness of joy was diffused throughout the tent and amid the numerous retainers of the aged chief. There was only one drawback to it all, and that was from the jealousy and envy of Hagar and her boy, who was now fourteen years of age. He was an active lad, with glittering eyes such as belong to his country, the great pet of his mother, and heretofore of his father also; but he now saw himself suddenly supplanted both in affections and in material expectations by the new heir. The mother would feel it more keenly than he would in the frank, open nature of boyhood. Doubtless, however, she instilled into him her jealousy and envy; and doubtless also the mutual spleen which he had often witnessed between mistress and the servant-woman, his mother, had sharpened his observation and sensibilities.

When the new heir was weaned, there was a great feast, with rejoicings both in the tent and among the retainers

without. But two hearts did not share in it; and of these two, the little Ishmael in his undisguisedness of youth made demonstration of his feelings by mockings and ridicule.

Severely were both child and mother punished for this. The mocking fell under the observation of Sarah,—perhaps was intended for her notice; and all her motherly indignation was fired at the sight. She came to her husband with the cry,

"Cast out this bond-woman, and her son; for the son of this bond-woman shall not be heir with my son, even with Isaac."

There was a painful domestic scene in that tent; the father's heart clinging with great fondness to the little boy, his first-born; Sarah passionately persistent; Hagar full of indignation and unavailing grief; the new infant looking with wide, wondering eyes on a tumult of which he was the innocent cause; the lad, frightened at the storm he had raised, but resolute for his mother, and turning appealing looks toward his father. Abraham was relieved from his dilemma by a heavenly warning, which announced to him that the lad was, and would continue to be, under divine protection; and that a nation would come from him, for his father's sake; but that it would now be best to separate the women and their sons.

On the morrow in the early light, the father sent Hagar and Ishmael away, after having given them provision of bread and water for their immediate necessities. There seems to have been a heartlessness in the act, which was so different from his former general strength of affection and deep interest in the lad, even when the new child was promised; and we can account for his conduct only by the irritations within the tent, and the rancorous haste of his wife to have both persons out of her sight. He knew also that God had pronounced a blessing on Ishmael, and had promised to "multiply him exceedingly and make him a great

nation;" and he believed therefore that they would be watched over and preserved.

His own residence was now at Beersheba, the place described in our first chapter, to which he had removed from Gerar, and where he had, by digging wells, secured a good supply of water for his flocks.

Hagar and her son wandered down southwardly toward the desert. Perhaps she hoped to be able to reach Egypt; more probably she went on in the sullen doggedness of passion deepening more and more into despair. The country, as she travelled on, soon began to change into the dreariness of those great stretches of baked earth and gravel forming the desert. It suited well to her abandonment and utter dreariness of feeling; herself and son outcasts, she felt a hatred for the world and all its brighter aspects. The region here was dreary enough, for they were leaving all signs of verdure behind, except the retem[1] bushes, a species of Scotch broom, which here and there dot the desert, and when the sun's rays come more slantingly afford some shade on the oven-like wastes. The water in their skin-bottle became exhausted; and as she wandered on she saw no signs of wells for a further supply. "Return?"—was that her son asking her to return! What! to that tent of rejoicing for her son's rival, and the place of her own shame and humiliation? Better, she probably thought, that they both should perish here in the wilderness, where no triumphant

1 Robinson, speaking of the shrubs of the desert, says: "One, the principal of them, is *Retem*, a species of the broom-plant, *Genista ractam* of Forsake. This is the largest and most conspicuous shrub of these deserts, growing thickly in water-courses and valleys. Our Arabs always selected the place of their encampment (if possible) in a spot where it grew, in order to be sheltered at night from the wind; and during the day, when they often went in advance of the camels, we found them not unfrequently sitting or sleeping under a bush of retem, to protect them from the sun. It was in this very desert, a day's journey from Beersheba, that the prophet Elijah lay down and slept beneath the same bush."

eyes, as of her mistress, or no pitying looks as from the menials, should witness the last scenes!

The two wandered on, they hardly knew whither, or why they went, except that in motion there seemed to be relief to angry feeling. But exhaustion came, and also a terrible thirst. When Hagar had once before been sent off in a similar manner, she was alone, and her passion could sustain her better. Now, the appealing eyes of her loved boy were on her; his complaints stung her anger now into greater force of pain; his moanings filled her with wretchedness; but she still dragged herself and him along, passion giving her strength, which it failed to do in him. Still on, now with words of rage toward those left behind, now with words of encouragement and kindness, and perhaps of passion toward him, till at last that hot, burning sun dried up his strength, and he sank exhausted and gasping and asking faintly for drink. There was none to give. She believed he must die—both probably must die; probably she wished it quickly for both. She laid him in such shade as a retem bush could give, and went off "a good way, as it were a bow-shot; for she said, Let me not see the death of the child. And she sat over against him, and lifted up her voice, and wept." Wrath had broken down. Affection alone had rule at last, and sobs and tears came to her relief.

Help was nearer than she had imagined. In that country the wells have sometimes no marks by which they can be distinguished, and one such was now not far off, but hitherto unseen by her.[1] A heavenly voice was heard in

[1] Van de Velde, in describing his late journey over this very region says, "We were among the wells of Ar'-ârah before we were aware of it. No stone walls or other masonry surrounds them, and nobody is aware of them until they are seen close at hand. . . . . The wells of Beersheba too are just as little visible at a distance as those of Ar'-ârah. I can now fully understand how Hagar, when her child seemed likely to die of thirst, found herself near such a well, without being aware of it until the Lord opened her eyes and enabled her to see it."

her extremity, directing her attention to it, and encouraging her with the promise that the lad should become the progenitor of a great nation. She felt the strength of the sustaining power; she was not alone now, and an outcast and abandoned, for Abraham's God had promised her help. So she and the lad lived and prospered as much as could be in the district of Arabia, which they finally reached. He "became an archer;" his mother in due time procured for him a wife from Egypt, and from him have sprung that singular Arab race, whose "hand is against every man, and every man's hand against them."

Abraham felt that this present home at the southern end of the pastoral region in Canaan, about thirty miles nearly southwest from Hebron, was well adapted to his unique condition in that country, where he and his people were to be an isolated race, distinct from all others in the land; and he prepared accordingly to make this his more permanent home. He planted here a grove, not probably of the oak or terebinth, which are not found as far south as this, but of the tamarisk, a tree of moderate size with feather-like, graceful branches; and here also he proceeded to have the wells dug which, through the long series of years to this day, have continued to assuage the thirst of the flocks in these extensive pasture-grounds. They have been a far better memorial respecting him than if he had piled up a mountain for his monument, greater even than the pyramids of Egypt, the wonder of the world. A dispute arising here connected with one of these wells, and threatening to make a disruption between him and Abimelech, he and the king, together with Phichol, chief of the host of the latter, both of whom had come to visit him, entered into a covenant of harmony and friendship, which they confirmed by mutual oaths. The place took from this incident its name, Beersheba, the *well of the oath.* Abimelech had said to him, some time previously, "Behold, my land is before thee;

dwell where it pleaseth thee." So this became his home.

We may presume that here also he built an altar, probably by his grove; and he "called there on the name of the Lord, the everlasting God."

CHAPTER X.

THE TRIAL OF FAITH.

WE return now to the scene depicted in the first chapter of this book; for the reader will notice that we have, in the intervening remarks, been reviewing the history of Abraham from his departure from Ur down to that period of time.

He had got to be an old man, even according to the reckoning of age in those early histories of our race. He had now advanced by several years beyond the age of one hundred, but was yet a hale, vigorous man; and we may picture him like one of the present sheikhs of that country, erect, of grave but benign aspect, gray-haired and venerable in appearance; to which we may doubtless add a strange, querying expression in his eye, as he gazed on that evening scene at Beersheba. His face did not show that full complacency which the view before him was adapted to produce; for this view took in vast herds and flocks, all his own, gathering now from the rich pastures for their evening refreshment at the wells. From far off they came, some rising over the distant low hills, some dotting the sides of the varied undulations or scattered over the widespread plains; while the setting sun was throwing its brightness on every object and filling all the air with amethystine hues. Amid this was heard the lowing of cattle, the bleating of

sheep, the shouts of herdsmen, the merriment of gay hearts among the hundreds of retainers gathering now for the social evening enjoyment and full of gladness and jokes at the reunions. Camels were lifting their long necks above all other gathering groups and looking in grave, sober dignity over the moving panorama; and the young camel progeny could afford amusement by their very grave sobriety of manners, in which no attempt at liveliness or play is ever known. Such was the scene on this evening about the several wells at Beersheba, and on which the old man was gazing with a pleased, and yet half-troubled eye. For his thoughts went, very often, after that cast-off son, his first-born and much-loved, from whom he had parted so unwillingly, and who had been lost to his sight amid those distant southern stretches of the desert. The second-born and heir was now here before him, the darling of the mother's satisfied heart, and well-beloved also of the father, as he truly might be; for the young man, Isaac ("Laughter"), was gentle, amiable in disposition, lacking in the activity and hardihood of character in Ishmael, but yet winning, obedient in every duty, and well adapted, if not to force admiration, yet to produce toward him from all an earnest and tender love. The father's eyes, therefore, amid the troubled thoughts that came trooping to him from that far southern desert, and amid which he could find no consolation of manliness and firmness in himself, rested for comfort on Isaac and on the future which was covenanted from heaven for this second son. A great nation was to come from him—such had the heavenly promise been—descendants were to be in number like the stars or like the dust of the earth; and through him were all the families of the earth to be blessed.

Abraham felt that his life had been a very strange one. He had not from the first been like other men; for amid the heathenish associations and surroundings at Ur, he had looked directly up to God with a pure, clear eye. He knew

that God had in return come nearer to him than to other men, and he felt the full glory and the full power of the covenant between God and himself. He knew too that he had been set apart in the world for mysterious,—he did not doubt, for good and glorious, purposes. In his many weaknesses, in his perplexities from long delay in the fulfilment of heavenly promises, in his troubles at home, where his heart found little support in duty but rather embarrassments and vexations, he still kept himself unmixed with idolatry and untainted. In Ur, in Egypt, at Hebron, his heart in this one thing was sound. This soundness had not always kept him from the want of integrity in life and even at times from baseness; yet still he had that great merit that he looked directly up to God, saw Him with a clear eye, called directly to Him, felt assured that He was always by. And although in his extremity when before Pharaoh and Abimelech, he ought to have known that God would protect hi but felt his faith there give way, still his faith always rallied again and was true to itself and to God. In judging also of his sins, which no one can think of without sternest condemnation toward him, and which the Bible history gives with simple clearness of narrative, we are to consider the world all around him, what were its sins and its codes of morals, and how a man would be insensibly influenced by these. Truth undoubtedly is always the same, and righteousness always the same, and our obligations to both are unswerving; but our judgment of the heinousness of a man's swerving from either must be modified by the circumstances of his education, the influences of society around him, and the nature of moral sentiment in that society. We are to form our estimate therefore of the wickedness sometimes seen in the lives of persons put forward even in Scripture as generally worthy men, not by our codes purified by eighteen centuries of Christianity, but in part by the codes and sentiments of all the world at the times in

which they lived. It is not only Christian charity, but also strict justice, to judge them by the times in which they lived, not by our times. No charity or justice, however, though it may modify our condemnation, can make sin otherwise than it actually is, simply and truly sin.

No logical difficulties now troubled the mind of Abraham as he looked on his son that evening. His thoughts kept centering upon the vast promises made by Jehovah respecting him,—the covenants made, the glory that was to come through him, the blessedness to all the earth. Isaac was to him, apart from fatherly affection, an intensely interesting object, a being marked by heaven, and designated as one by whom God was to give his highest favors to the world. No wonder that Abraham loved and doted on that son!

With what amazement, then, did this patriarch, just after the scene detailed, hear a command given from heaven,

"*Take now thy son, thine only son Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah;* and OFFER HIM THERE FOR A BURNT-OFFERING *upon one of the mountains which I will tell thee of.*"

The first supposition that might occur now to our minds would be that Abraham could not believe such a communication to be heavenly; and that all his feelings would revolt against the demand as a thing incongruous with the dealing of a good Creator toward his creatures, and therefore impossible to come from God. This leads us to revert to the idea suggested above, that we must judge those ancient people by the times in which they lived, and not by our own.

Human sacrifices, as a choice offering to their gods, prevailed in the countries adjoining Abraham's residence; and, "Down to the times of Manetho and Plutarch," says Bunsen, "and certainly to the fall of paganism in Egypt, the sacrificial stamp remained a speaking proof of the original sin-offering in Egypt also having been human sacrifice, which

is indeed implied in the primary idea of sacrifice. It represented a man on his knees, with his hands tied behind him and the sacrificial knife pointed at his throat." "Manetho related," says Plutarch, "that in Eilthyia (the city of the mother of Isis) the sacrifice of the so-called Typhoneans was performed during the dog-days,—human sacrifices, namely, when the ashes of the victims were scattered to the winds. This account is derived from Manetho's work on 'Archæology and Devotion.' Porphyry quotes this same work to the following effect: 'Amos [Aahmes, according to Bunsen, the first Pharaoh of the new or restored Egyptian empire, and after Abraham's time] abolished the practice of human sacrifices in Heliopolis [On of our Scriptures]. They were formerly performed to Hera (the mother of Isis). The victims were examined and a seal was affixed to them, just as the calves without blemish are now examined and sealed. Three were sacrificed daily." The celebrated Egyptologist, Wilkinson, has recently discovered on the monuments a stamp answering exactly to the description of Manetho, and has given a copy of it in the fifth volume of his "Manners and Customs of the Egyptians."[1]

"It was a custom among the Phœnicians and Canaanites," says another excellent authority, "in times of great calamity, for their kings to sacrifice one of their sons, whom they loved best; and it was common both with them, as well as with the Moabites and Ammonites, to sacrifice their children. . . . Upon extraordinary occasions, *multitudes* were sacrificed at once to their sanguinary deities. Thus, during the battle between the Sicilian army under Gelon, and the Carthaginians [a Phœnician colony] under Amilcar in Sicily, the latter remained in his camp offering sacrifices to the deities of his country, and consuming, upon one large pile, the bodies of numerous victims. (Herod. lib. vii. c. 167.) When Aga-

[1] See Bunsen's "Egypt's Place in History."

thocles was about to besiege Carthage, its inhabitants, seeing the extremity to which they were reduced, imputed all their misfortunes to the anger of Saturn; because, instead of offering up children of noble descent (who were usually sacrificed), there had been fraudulently substituted for them the children of slaves and foreigners. Two hundred children of the best families in Carthage were therefore immolated to propitiate the offended divinity, to whom upward of three hundred citizens voluntarily sacrificed themselves from a sense of their guilt of this pretended crime."[1] The chief oracles among the heathen, as that at Delphi, at Dodona, and that of Jupiter Saotes, also directed human sacrifices to be offered.

Abraham prepared to obey the command. Whatever were his feelings toward Isaac himself, the terrible influences around him, and the systems of belief and practice in Egypt and Phœnicia and Canaan—where it was considered that the more precious the child the more acceptable to the divinity was the offering—kept him from revolting from the command or questioning its origin on account of its terrible nature; and he yielded. Nor would the young man, under such universal teachings around them, rebel and refuse submission; for his gentleness of disposition would lead him readily to acquiesce in the belief that he and his father would thus be paying the highest possible honor to God. Our own views of the Jehovah are certainly far different, and our training has been different; but we must remember that Abraham was only catching glimpses of the Deity by present revelations; that he was alone amid the dark overcloudings of heathendom all around, without a human being to go to for counsel or instruction, and that he could do no more than listen to promptings which had mysteriously led

[1] See Horne's Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures.

him on. To them he had always yielded implicit obedience with fulness of unquestioning faith.

He prepared now to obey, his faith not giving way, but his heart torn into shreds and bleeding at every pore. For he loved the young man with such an entireness of love as could exist only where there was no other heart's treasure in the world. His wife he had known to be querulous, sometimes despotic, always jealous; but the son was one upon whom all his affections could be lavished without check, and who could return them without stint from any countervailing influences. The other son was gone: the father could never think of that one without a feeling of self-abasement from his own yieldingness, and also of but half-stifled anger against his jealous wife; but here there was no drawback, and the grievances from conjugal occurrences made his love—which we know from other things to have been capable of great strength—all centre with additional power on this, the son of his old age, the heaven-heralded child, about whom such future wonderful glory had been promised. His affections had been allowed to have, and they had, full concentration on his beloved Isaac.

God, it was true, could give another, as he had given this one: there Abraham's faith did not waver; but yet!—to remove Isaac would be to make the whole world to him a blank, a terrible, dark abyss.

But he set about obeying the command.

The Scriptures tell us that "God did tempt Abraham;" but a more correct translation would have been, he "proved" him, "put him to the test;"[1] not that the omniscient Jehovah needed any proof for himself, but because the example was needed for the world. And so this has been, ever since,

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[1] As in 1 Sam. xvii. 39, where, twice, the same Hebrew word as in this instance means *tried* or *proved;* and in Job iv. 2, literally, "If any one *try* a word with thee."

to the world, an *example of pure, unhesitating, unquestioning faith.*

Though the faith was such, still the trial was a terrible one; and every item of the preparation,—the cleaving of the wood for the offering, the arrangements for the fire to be kept up on the way, the knife for the sacrifice,—all was like a sword piercing the father's heart. Questions also by the mother, or by the young man himself, were to be evaded or ambiguously answered, leaving the eyes of the questioners still expressing doubt or dissatisfaction, and making the weight of the secret in the old man's heart—a guilty secret, it seemed to be—almost intolerable to be borne alone. But he bore it alone, and in silence, as far as possible; and then putting the wood on an ass, and with two servants and his son in company, he set out on his journey. "What answer," he thought, "must he give to the mother on his return?" He was to be informed by divine admonition respecting the place intended for the sacrifice, and was led onward from Beersheba in a northerly direction, past Hebron with its old associations, and where, if there were now greetings from old acquaintances, he could have no heart to reply; past where afterward grew up Bethlehem, at which, centuries afterward, was to appear in human form the great self-sacrifice for the sins of the whole world, of which, indeed, Abraham's intended act was faintly typical; and now, probably somewhere about this place, looking forward, he saw[1] the mountain, Moriah, where his own altar for the purposed sacrifice of his son was to be built.[2] They travelled slowly, for the distance from Beersheba to Mount

[1] A recent traveller has designated the place near this whence Moriah may be seen, "afar off."

[2] Dean Stanley supposes that Mt. Gerizim was the place selected for the sacrifice; but, if there were no other objection, the distance from Beersheba to this mountain (seventy-five miles) would be a sufficient argument against such an hypothesis.

Moriah is only forty-two miles, and they did not arrive there till the third day; but, indeed, the aged man had no inclination for a rapid journey. Perhaps he faintly hoped for some interposition or some countermand from heaven on the way—probably looked around anxiously, as he went, for some angel-form to appear to him, as was done when, in his tent, the announcement of Isaac's approaching birth was made. No doubt he listened nervously at night for the well-known heavenly voice, till expectation, and at last all hope, had become extinct. There was the mountain: he must proceed to it: there was to be the end! Yet through all this journey, and with all these lacerated feelings—even hope extinguished—faith was firm and true. He looked up to God with a clear, undoubting eye. The belief prevalent among those nations that the sacrifice most acceptable to their deity was that which was nearest and most precious to the person offering it, strengthened his sentiment of obedience now, as he went on toward an act from which all natural feeling and all affection recoiled as horrible. What a tempest there was in his heart! But faith was strongest even now.

He directed the servants, at a proper time, to remain behind with the ass; and placing the fuel on the young man, and taking the fire and knife, he left them and proceeded with his son to the mountain.

"My father," said the young man, as they went, "behold the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?" He answered,

"My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering."

On the mountain the altar was built, and the wood was laid upon it; then the secret of the intended sacrifice was all revealed to the young man! But there was no resistance on his part. The belief prevalent in the country had no doubt taken hold of him also; and he felt, in addition to

that, the faith which was so strong in the father. He saw and knew all the anguish in the father's heart, and that the sacrifice in that heart would be a more frightful thing than that of his own life would be to himself. He was bound and laid on the altar, upon the wood. "And Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son."

But an angel interposed. A voice from heaven ordered him to stay the knife and directed his attention to a ram caught in a thicket near by; and this was offered on the altar as a burnt-sacrifice.

We now, after a lapse of thirty-eight hundred years, gaze back at that faith so clear and unsullied in the old man's anguished heart. Many millions since that time have gazed back at it. It is a wonderful spectacle that may well make us strong, as it has made myriads since that day strong, in faithful obedience to God. We think of the wild hurricane of feeling in the father's heart; of the anguish in all his lacerated being; of his persistence in duty; and then of the crushing weight lifted suddenly off, and of the thrill of joy in the relief; and the Christian beholds in all the touching scene a typical presentation of a greater Sacrifice voluntarily chosen, where was *no relief;* CHRIST OFFERED, and THE SACRIFICE MADE!

By this altar, where Abraham stood on Moriah, promises were given to him, renewed from former occasions, but now with greater form and solemnity: "By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord;" and then the words declare that blessings should flow upon him and his posterity. Among the promises was one most precious, as it was widest in extent, of all: "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." The promise has been fulfilled, and in a Sacrifice *where the Victim was not spared.*

Death, however, came not many years after this[1] to make

[1] Josephus says twelve years.

really desolate the tent of Abraham. In his migratory, pastoral life he had removed again to the neighborhood of Hebron; and there he saw life ebb and pass away from her who had for so long a time been his faithful wife and true friend. Sarah was one hundred and twenty-seven years old when she died. She had been his wife for more than sixty-two years, and had accompanied him in sincere and unshaken affection, first from her ancient home and kindred, and then in his varied changes of place; at times even too obedient to his wishes and too careful of his well-being and his life. Her jealousy came from the very strength of her affections; and its manifestations were entirely in accordance with customs such as we see still prevailing among those Eastern people. She must have possessed remarkable beauty, even to an advanced age. She appears to have presided well over the domestic affairs, and was a good companion, good mother, and a faithful wife.

Abraham, after he had mourned for her according to the forms of the country, and in a depth of grief which no outward forms can ever reach, presented himself before the rulers of Kirjath-arba (Hebron) and asked, for her remains, a burial-place which he had selected adjoining to their city, and probably by the spot where he and she had often resided in their "tent-house." In a grove in front of Hebron was a cave, seemingly a double cave, if we may judge from its name, Machpelah (a *doubling*, from *Kaphal, to double*), and also from the results of explorations recently made. Probably there were two partly separated by a natural wall. To his request the rulers answered, "Hear us, my lord; thou art a mighty prince among us; in the choice of our sepulchres bury thy dead; none of us shall withhold from thee his sepulchre, but that thou mayest bury thy dead." He requested them to intercede with Ephron, the owner of the cave, for the sale of it and a portion of the ground; but the latter offered it as a gift. There is a singular beauty in the

courtesies of these people on this occasion, when the grief-stricken old man came before them at the gate of their city, —the usual place for public official transactions;—and also in the dignity of Abraham, with his heart set on having a resting-place for the dead so near his own home, but still, in his deep sorrow, observing the courtly forms of the people of that country: "And Abraham bowed himself before the people of the land. And he spake unto Ephron in the audience of the people of the land, saying, But if thou wilt give it, I pray thee hear me; I will give thee money for the field; take it of me, and I will bury my dead there." Ephron answered, "My lord, hearken unto me; the land is worth four hundred shekels of silver;[1] what is that betwixt me and thee? bury therefore thy dead."

The place was purchased, and "the field of Ephron, which was in Machpelah, which was before Mamre, the field and the cave which was therein, and all the trees that were in the field, that were in all the borders round about, were made sure unto Abraham for a possession in the presence of all the children of Heth, before all that went in at the gate of the city."

This spot, still capable of being identified beyond any doubt, is now enclosed within a high wall carefully guarded by the Mohammedan possessors against all intrusion by either Jew or Christian. It will be noticed more at length in a future part of this work.

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[1] Estimated to be equal to about $250 of our money.

CHAPTER XI.

HOW ALPHABETS WERE ORIGINALLY MADE.

THE statement that the field of Ephron and the cave of Machpelah "were made sure unto Abraham for a possession" seems to convey the idea of a written contract, and brings us to a most interesting query respecting writing in those times. That subject, if investigated, will show the reader the origin of the very printed letters which are now meeting his eye in this book, and their close connection with such writing as that to which Abraham probably there put his name; and will moreover put before us the progressive action of the human mind in one of the most difficult of all undertakings,—that of making objects presented to the *eye* combine in intelligible forms addressed to the *ear*. The matter on which we are now entering must also be understood in order to a full comprehension of affairs in Egypt, soon to come before us. So we enter upon it here.

The first effort among any people to convey ideas by delineations would be such as we still see on our Indian lodges, where rude drawings of the human figure, and also arbitrary marks, answer the purpose sufficiently to a certain extent. But only to a very small extent; and when definite or minute information is needed, these must fail. If it was desirable, for instance, to state that Menes built Hara,[1] al-

[1] *Hara*, the *On* of Gen. xli. 45, 50, and xlvi. 20, and the *Heliopolis* of the Greeks, was the most sacred city of Egypt, and is believed to have been built by Menes, the first of the Egyptian kings. The commencement of his dynasty is variously estimated by Egyptologists, Poole placing it at 2700, Bunsen at 3643, and Lepsius 3793 B. C.; the latter two doubtless misled by supposing certain Egyptian dynasties consecutive, which were in reality contemporaneous in different parts of the country.

though the figure of a man with an attached mark of royalty and a city might be drawn, this would leave it doubtful who is the king, what the city, and what is the connection between the two. Something more definite is needed; and now commences an exceedingly interesting effort of the human mind, which we are quite able to trace; and to enable us to bring it more clearly to our comprehension, we will suppose the effort to be made now with our language, just as we know it to have been done in a different language in those remote times. We will suppose that no alphabet at all now existed, nothing but such indefinite pictures as are presented above; and that we wish in English to make the definite statement, *Menes built Hara.*

On considering these spoken words, we find that the first part of the sound in Menes is common also to *mouse, mouth, moon, mill,* and various other words. Now, if any one or all of these easily recognized objects be pictured with the general understanding that only *the initial sound* in it is to be taken, we have the sound *M* brought to the ear by our eyes, and have taken an important step in getting the name of the individual. The next sound is *E*; and if we picture an *ear, eagle, eel* with the same idea in the mind of all observers, that *the initial sound* is what is intended, we have gained another sound conveyed by the eye to the ear; and with the former, *M,* united to it, we have *Me.* So again *nose,* or *net, nail, noose,* pictured, will, with the same understanding, give us a representation for the sound *N*; *E* can be procured as before; and *S* is afforded by the initial sound in *sea, sack, sail, serpent, sun.* Consequently the previous understanding being general that the object pictured *is to represent its initial sound,* then *mouth, ear, net, eagle, sun* sketched to our eye will furnish readily the sound *Menes,* that which we have been trying to bring definitively to the observer. The name of the city, Hara, is in the same manner made fully perceptible to our ear by pictures of a *hand,* an *arm,* a *rose,*

an arch, making *Hara*; and the word *built* can also be given to our ear by the same process, a *bow* or *beetle* for *B*; and so to the end, *T* being represented by a *tiger or tower*. Such pictures or signs are called *phonetic*, from the Greek word *Phonē, a sound.*

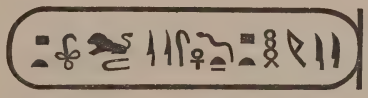
Probably there begins now to dawn upon the reader's mind an idea of the meaning of the Egyptian hieroglyphics, which, with some exceptions, are not representations of ideas, as they are generally considered to be, but representatives of *sounds;* that is, are *phonetic pictures*, or an attempt at *spelling* by *pictures*. There are exceptions; for some of them are not phonetic, but *ideographic* or *symbolic;* that is, the picture represents a full idea; and some of them are what is called *determinative*, that is, limiting or determining the application of the sound or thing represented; and these exceptions, having no mark by which they can be known, cause the great difficulty in the way of reading the hieroglyphics of Egypt. If it were not for them, that is, if all were phonetic,—*a spelling by pictures*—the reading would be easy to any one who has once acquired a knowledge of the ancient Egyptian language. This language may be learnt; for that spoken now by the Copts of Egypt, the descendants of that ancient race, bears nearly the same resemblance to that of their ancestors that the present Italian does to the Latin, or the modern to the ancient Greek; and, through it, dictionaries and grammars of the ancient Egyptian language have been recently formed. The great Egyptologist, Bunsen, says: "The conclusion therefore is that the dialect of the Christian Egyptians or Copts[1] is but

[1] Lady Duff Gordon, in her sprightly letters from Egypt (1863–65), says, "The Copts are evidently the ancient Egyptians,—the slightly aquiline nose and long eye are the very same as those on the profiles on the tombs and temples, and also like the very earliest Byzantine pictures. *Au reste*, the face is handsome, but generally sallow and rather inclined to puffiness, and the figure wants the grace of the Arabs; nor has any Copt the thorough-

a younger branch of the Egyptian language, the latest form of the popular dialect, although, from the age of the Ptolemies downward, mixed with Greek words and forms. In its national elements it adheres even more closely to the old Egyptian than the modern Greek to the Hellenic."

In addition to the difficulty arising from the determinative and ideographic figures, the latter of which are very numerous, is one also from the large choice in the phonetic figures; for, as we have seen above in our own language, *S* may be represented by *sea*, *ship*, *star*, *swallow*, *sack*, *sail*, *serpent*, *sun*, and a variety of other forms; and we notice in the hieroglyphics, not only that this variety exists, but that the abundance of objects allowed them to employ adroit flattery or taste in the choice of figures. For instance, in writing *Ptolemy*, although many figures of objects would have supplied them with the sound *L* in that word, they chose the lion, *Labo*, for it; and in expressing the name of Noub, one of their gods, the sound *B* was afforded by their word for a *ram*, one of the symbols of this deity, and this figure was taken in preference.

We present now to the reader a sample of the Egyptian hieroglyphics in the word Ptolemy, with adjuncts, as taken



from their monuments. It will be seen that they are enclosed in an oval (or *cartouche*), which signifies at once that it is a royal name; their reading might be vertically, from top to bottom, or horizontally, from right to left, or the contrary, there being no fixed rule, except that in horizontal

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bred *distingué* look of the meanest man or woman of good Arab blood. Their feet are the long-toed, flattish foot of the Egyptian statue, while the Arab foot is classically perfect, and you could put your hand under the instep."

reading we must always read *toward* the head of the figures. In this case it is from left to right. We have 1st, a mat, pronounced in their language *P* or *Pu;* 2d, a hemisphere, called *T;* 3d, a cord, called *U A;* 4th, a lion, *Labo;* 5th, a stand of a boat, called *M A;* 6th, two reeds, pronounced *I;* 7th, the back of a chair, pronounced *S.* The whole makes *Ptulmis*, the Coptic for "Ptolemy."

Next comes a girdle buckle, pronounced *Anch*, signifying life or living; and next, a hemisphere and a serpent, the former pronounced *T*, the latter called *Tetbi*, thus producing together, *t t;* the whole making together *Anchta*, the Egyptian for *ever-living, eternal.*

Finally, in the cartouche, we have as in the beginning, a mat and hemisphere, *P* and *T;* and then a twisted cord, *H* or *Hu*, making *P T H*, or to *Phtha*, their god Vulcan; then a plough or hoe, pronounced *M R*, to love; and two reeds, pronounced *I;* the two together designating the past participle of the word *M R, to love;* the whole signifying *beloved of Phtha.*

The oval line enclosing all is a cord called *R N*, and meaning "a name," and is of the kind used for enclosing royal names.

The whole cartouche therefore reads, "*Ptolemy, the ever-living, beloved of Phtha;*" and the reader has in this, with the exception of the ideographs and determinatives, a full exhibition of the Egyptian hieroglyphics, which he is perhaps surprised to see is not a system of pictures addressed directly to the mind, but of *phonetics* by pictures, that is, a mode of *spelling* by *pictures*, taking the initial sound of each picture presented.

It must be obvious that this mode of expressing ideas, although answering for the labored cutting on walls and gateways and obelisks, would be unsuitable for any more rapid mode of making records; and accordingly they soon resorted to a contraction of the figures, sometimes, indeed,

retaining but little resemblance to the original forms. What was lost in the beauty and dignity in the sculpture was made up in the facility of expression; but still, while a portion of the new characters were *phonetic*, a very large number, as before, were ideographic or symbolic forms; and, inasmuch as the meaning of these ideographic forms was known only to their learned men, who were always of the priestly order, and was kept exclusively among them, the new kind of writing is known as the sacred or *hieratic* writing.

The introduction of this latter, more rapid manner of presenting thoughts was made necessary by the use of *papyrus*, of which we have fragments variously estimated to belong to the 6th dynasty (B. C. 2100), and to the 15th dynasty (B. C. 2000), the latter belonging to the time of the shepherd-kings. Papyrus (whence our word *paper*) is a water plant, having a triangular stalk without branches, about the size of a man's arm, and growing to the height of twelve or fifteen feet, where it is terminated by a beautiful, feathery tuft. It was, in those times, cultivated in the marshes toward the mouths of the Nile, and was a government monopoly, which made it too expensive for use among any but the wealthy. It is not found at present anywhere in Egypt, but the writer of this work has seen abundance of it about the fountain of Arethusa, near Syracuse in Sicily. It is manufactured into writing material in that city, and sold to the curious. The outside rind of the plant is hard, like that of our Indian corn; but within, is a fibrous pith, which is cut into thin slices; and these, laid so as slightly to overlap, and then with a cross-layer for strength, and glued, form a pretty good paper, on which we may easily write with a pen. The sculptures show it to have been in use in the time of Cheops, the builder of the first pyramid.

In these steps of progress we come now to the most important and useful of them all, that of the formation of a simple alphabet open to the use of every one, and without

the encumbrances of ideographs or determinatives. This we find first among the Phœnicians; but the analogy between it and what we have just been considering is so clear that we need have no hesitation in calling its origin Egyptian. We may believe that the Hyksos race, while in that country, adopted the phonetic system in the hieroglyphics, applying it to their own language; and, scorning the efforts of the Egyptian priests to confine knowledge to their own class by entangling it among the ideographic and determinative forms to which they alone had the key, this more simple and practical shepherd-race constructed an alphabet free from such encumbrances and open to the use of all. This alphabet, rejecting the employment of numerous figures (as, for instance, *sea*, *sword*, *star*, &c., for the sound *S*), uses one figure for any one initial sound, and has all its letters *phonetic*, rejecting the use of ideographs and symbolic forms. Thus every one could read, and knowledge became open to all. This race, as already noticed, had probably extended their settlements along the eastern shore of the Mediterranean previous to their final expulsion from Egypt; and from them grew up the great maritime cities of Sidon and Tyre, which afterward sent their colonies far to the west, even into Spain, and it is said as far as Britain. That their idea of representing sounds by figures, taking the initial sound in each figure, is copied from the Egyptian, will be evident from the following alphabet, gathered from Phœnician inscriptions yet remaining. It will be seen that every letter is a picture, such as could be rapidly drawn, of an object or part of an object, the initial sound in whose name furnishes the power of that letter. We annex also the Hebrew alphabet as deduced from Hebrew coins; and then we give the Greek (from which comes our own alphabet), and the reader will see that the letters which he is now looking at in this present book are through the Greek derived from the Phœnician; and doubtless through the Phœnician, had

Phœnician.[1]	Old Hebrew, from the coins.	Names.	Meanings of names.	Sound of the letter.	Gr'k letter	Names of Greek letters.	Later Hebrew.
		Aleph	Ox	a	A	Alpha	א
		Beth	House	bh	B	Beta	ב
		Gimel	Camel	gh	Γ	Gamma	ג
		Daleth	Door	dh	Δ	Delta	ד
		He		h	E	Epsilon	ה
		Vau	Nail, peg	v	Y	Upsilon	ו
		Zayin	Armor	z	Z	Zeta	ז
		Heth	Hedge	hh	H	Eta	ח
		Tet	Serpent	t	Θ	Theta	ט
		Yodh	Hand	y	I	Iota	י
		Kaph	{Hollow hand	kh	K	Kappa	ך כ
		Lamedh	Ox-goad	l	Λ	Lambda	ל
		Mem		m	M	Mu	ם מ
		Nun	Fish	n	N	Nu	ן נ
		Samekh	Triclinium	s	Ξ	Xi	ס
		Yayin	Eye		O	Omicron	ע
		Pe	Mouth	ph	Π	Pi	ף פ
		Tsade	Fish-hook	ts			ץ צ
		Quoph	Ear	q			ק
		Resh	Head	r	P	Rho	ר
		{Shin Sin	Tooth	sh s	Σ	Sigma	ש ש
		Tau	{Cross-mark	th	T	Tau	ת

[1] From the Sidon sarcophagus, about B. C. 599.

their first start in the *phonetic* efforts of the Egyptians on their monuments. This is a long history, but such progressive effort of the human mind is certainly a very interesting one. Our own *A* is here seen to be a picture of an ox's head, roughly sketched, but showing the horns, ears and nose, and has the power of the initial sound in the Phœnician or Hebrew word Aleph, *ox*. Our *B* is taken from the picture of a tent or house, in Hebrew, Beth, and so giving us the *B* sound. Our *G* is not so close a copy but is evidently from the Greek *Γ*, and this from the Hebrew word Gimel, *camel*, the long neck and head of which can be traced in the Hebrew letter, and still better in the Phœnician. Our *D* is a still nearer approach than the Greek △ to the original Daleth, *door*; and so through the remainder, where the reader can for himself trace the resemblance, and the origin of nearly all our alphabet. We have also the means of tracing the Samaritan alphabet to an ancient date; and the hostile jealousies between those people and the Jews from B. C. 721 to the present time are a warrant that the Samaritan is not simply a copy from the Hebrew, with which, however, it is almost indentical. Of Phœnician inscriptions there are several remaining, among them one hundred and twenty votive tablets; but the best and longest is a recent discovery in the neighborhood of Sidon. A native, digging there for treasure in 1855, disinterred a sarcophagus of blue-black basalt, eight by four feet in size, on the surface of which is sculptured a human figure much resembling those on the Egyptian mummy cases. On this there is an inscription in twenty-two lines, the letters in perfect condition, and the resemblance between them and what we see on the Hebrew coins so close, and the language also so similar to the Hebrew, that scholars conversant with the latter have little trouble in making a translation. It informs us that "King Esmunazar, king of the Sidonians," &c., had this tomb prepared for himself. "Carried away before my time," it says,

"in the flood of days—in dumbness ceases the son of gods. Dead do I lie in this tomb in the grave, in the place which I have built;" and then it proceeds to warn all men not to "disturb him in the couch of his slumbers," with imprecations on any one who may molest his remains. The time of the sarcophagus is supposed to be about 599 B. C., but the completeness and finish of the character shows this to have been in use long before that time.

For inscriptions distinctly Hebrew we have to resort to Jewish coins, the earliest of which was that of Simon Maccabæus (B. C. 139). Such coinage was continued under the successive rulers till B. C. 40; the characters used are nearly or quite identical with those on the Phœnician monuments.[1]

We have given finally, in the above table, the *square* Hebrew alphabet in present use. It seems to have had its origin during "the captivity," when the Jews became familiar with the neat, arrow-headed character in use by the Euphrates. The change to this form commenced, it is supposed, in the time of Ezra, and advancing gradually, was not complete till the first century of our era. The letters in the square alphabet are evidently those referred to by our Saviour in his Sermon on the Mount, the word "*tittle*," in the original κεραία, *horn* (Matt. v. 18), meaning the horn-like protuberance which the reader may see on several letters of this square form (for instance ס), while in this alphabet the yod "(*jot*)" is also strikingly smaller than any of the other letters.

Inasmuch, then, as the language on the Phœnician monuments and in the Pentateuch may be considered as the same, and the written characters employed by both being also apparently identical, we are able, from such means, to place here before the reader what is probably a correct representation of the first verse in Genesis and the first of the ten commandments as they were originally written. The reader

[1] See "History of Jewish Coinage," &c., by F. W. Madden, M.R.S.L.

will observe that the reading is from right to left; for that was the mode of writing then, as it is still in the Arabic:

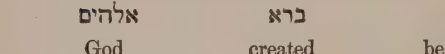
GENESIS I. 1.

Original Hebrew.

The same in the more modern square character.

אה	אלהים	ברא	ברשית
the	God	created	beginning In

Original.

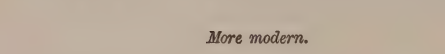


More modern.

הארץ	ואה	השמים
earth	the and	heavens

EXODUS XX. 3.

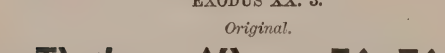
Original.



More modern.

אלהים	לך	יהיה	לא
gods	thee to	shall be	Not

Original.



More modern.

פני	על	אחרים
me	before	other

The vast improvement by the Phœnicians in simplifying *phonetics* seems to have reacted upon the people from whom they drew their first idea of thus addressing the ear through the eye, and to have produced among the Egyptians what we find as their most simple form of writing, namely, the

Demotic, sometimes styled *Enchorial*.[1] It is a simple, plain alphabet, made for rapid writing, and it is difficult to trace any figures for its origin. Some have thought that it bears a resemblance to the Phœnician. It was used for the common purposes of life, while the priests still adhered to the hieroglyphic or hieratic, concealing the mysteries of their doctrines in the ideographs. Plato, who travelled and studied in that country, says, "The priests teach their children two kinds of letters, those called sacred, and those which are more generally learned;" also, "the people of Egypt generally, as distinguished from the priests, learn from their fathers or their kinsmen the training that belongs to each special mode of life, but letters only to a small extent, and not all, but chiefly those who practice some of the arts." We should indeed mistake, if we were to conclude, from the immensity of records on the monuments and papyrus and the walls of their tombs, that learning was a general pursuit in that country; for although these afford abundant exhibitions of the private life of those people, extending to the minutest incidents, no individual is ever represented reading, except in some official function; and no female is ever seen reading or writing: all the men so employed have the air of professional scribes.

In the long lapse of ages since the Egyptians ceased to be a nation, the keys to all its records—Hieroglyphic, Hieratic and Demotic—had been lost; and its numberless monuments and papyri and inscribed walls of tombs, spread thickly over with the means of speech, were yet speechless; dumb, though seemingly trying to find a voice. Learned men, century after century, wondered at the sight, and were perplexed. At length, in 1799, a French engineer connected with the first Napoleon's expedition to that country, in constructing a bastion to a fort near the mouth of the Rosetta branch of

[1] Supposed to have been brought into use about the sixth century B. C.

the Nile, disinterred a *stele*, or tablet, on which were inscriptions in three different characters: 1st, in Hieroglyphics; 2d, in an unknown character; and 3d, in Greek. The middle one has since been ascertained to be Demotic. It was immediately surmised that the Greek was a translation of the other two; and so it has turned out to be. The French, on surrendering to the British arms, attempted to carry the tablet away with them, as not being a trophy of war; but this was resisted, and it has been safely placed in the British Museum in London. This is the famous "Rosetta Stone," and is in dimensions about three feet by two and a half, but broken at the corners, and with imperfect lines at the two ends. It immediately received great attention, and probably would have been deciphered in a short time if the firm belief that the hieroglyphic figures represented only ideas had not entirely excluded any suspicion of their being representatives of sounds. The younger Champollion, however, in 1822, while attentively considering the cartouches of Ptolemy which are repeated on this stone, and which, from the Greek below, were known to be this name, and comparing them with one on an obelisk at Philæ, where a Greek translation below showed that the name was that of Cleopatra, observed that the figure of a lion, the fourth in the former, was the second in the latter; and he was aware that the lion was called *labo* in the ancient Egyptian language. He saw that *labo* might stand for the letter *L* in both inscriptions; and the query darted into him with thrilling power, Is this figure *Labo* put there in order to give us, not the idea of lion but its initial sound, *L*?

The discovery was made![1] The hieroglyphics had at last found a voice! and from every side they were speaking to him!

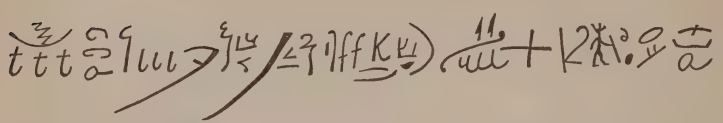
[1] An English scholar, Dr. Young, was near making this discovery in 1818, but after advancing some distance toward it, was misled by the belief in ideographs.

He persevered, and others have followed in his footsteps; and although the efforts of the Egyptian priests in those ancient times to monopolize knowledge by keeping it so much in symbolic forms, still often baffles the determined men of our days, much has been gained; for the books for such knowledge are to be found everywhere in Egypt,—columns, even sculptured figures of men and gods, magnificent gateways, halls within and walls without, obelisks, tombs,—scarcely a surface anywhere, whether in palace, or temple, or the coffins and cerements of the dead,—all are inscribed; great treasures of papyri are also still unrolled, or continually placed open to the eye. It is a world of knowledge that may well tempt men on and make them enthusiasts!

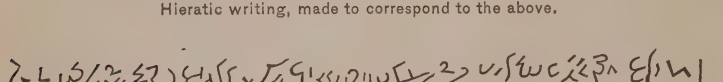
The most elaborate works of recent date on this subject are those by the Chevalier Bunsen and by Lepsius, both of Berlin. The latter, with six or seven assistants, was sent by the Prussian government to Egypt, where he and his coadjutors spent about three years, during which time they examined sixty-seven pyramids (which, with few exceptions, were found to have been prepared for royal sepulchres) and one hundred and thirty tombs of private individuals, to which were added a vast number of other explorations. They made copies and sketches, so that they were able to return to Europe with eight hundred folio plates of drawings. These have been published by the same government in thirteen volumes of huge folio size, and in a style worthy of the royal patron.

Subjoined is a copy, from Bunsen's work, of part of the sixth line on the "Rosetta Stone," in both the Hieroglyphic and Demotic characters. The central line is made up from other sources of Hieratic characters, to correspond to the other two. The reading, it will be perceived is from right to left.

Hieroglyphic inscription, from the Rosetta Stone.



Hieratic writing, made to correspond to the above.



Corresponding portion of the Demotic inscription on the Rosetta Stone.

CHAPTER XII.

A WIFE FOR ISAAC.

THERE was now in the tent of Abraham that wearing loneliness which comes when a beloved object is removed, and that object one about whom all the heart-strings had been entwined. We listen, as if every moment we are about to hear the well-remembered voice; or are startled by the movement of a garment, and raise the eyes to look. There is a constant, lingering half-expectancy of the coming of the lost one; but we wake to the dreary consciousness that there will be no coming, no voice, no well-remembered footstep ever again heard. Our thought, persistently on every occurrence, has for its first suggestion, "What pleasure this will give her," or, "About this I will consult her," or, "A double joy I will have in communicating this to her;" and then we know once more that all such thought is vain. This is the world's darkest solitude.

Sarah had been the only bond left between Abraham and

his father's house on the banks of the Euphrates. He felt now, more than ever, how utterly he was a stranger in the land of Canaan.

News had recently been brought to him about his brother's family at Haran, and he firmly resolved to seek there a wife for Isaac, who was now about forty years of age. He called his oldest and most trusted servant, and imposed on him a solemn oath: "Thou shalt not take a wife unto my son of the daughters of the Canaanites among whom I dwell; but thou shalt go unto my country and to my kindred, and take a wife unto my son Isaac." He added that God would send his angel before the messenger. But never was Isaac himself to be restored to that land; here in Canaan was his son to dwell; God had firmly bound Abraham and his descendants to his present home.

The servant, taking ten camels and numerous presents in addition to the purchase gifts, which, as we see also in the present habits of that country, were to be made for the intended wife, went on the long journey up toward Damascus, and across the northern edge of the great Arabian desert, and so to the fertile lands bordering on the northern portions of the great river of the East. Among the eight children of Nahor, Abraham's brother, was Bethuel, the owner of large flocks, but residing in a town or city, to the wells outside of which the women of the place were in the habit of resorting for water; and to which the servant of Abraham now drew near. It was an anxious time for the man, for the happiness of the whole family in Canaan was dependent on his choice; and how was he to choose among these family connexions, all strangers to him? He remembered, however, his master's word that God would send his angel with him; and he prayed now: "O Lord God of my master Abraham, I pray thee send me good speed this day, and show kindness unto my master Abraham. Behold, I stand here by the well of water; and the daughters of the

men of the city come out to draw water; and let it come to pass that the damsel to whom I shall say, Let down thy pitcher, I pray thee, that I may drink, and she shall say, Drink, and I will give thy camels drink also; let the same be she that thou hast appointed for thy servant Isaac; and thereby shall I know that thou hast showed kindness unto my master."

Before he had quite finished his prayer a young girl had approached the well and had descended and filled her pitcher. The servant's eyes lighted up with a double joy; for not only was she there seemingly in immediate answer to his prayer, but she was also very beautiful, and with a countenance expressive of the gentleness and kindness of her heart. He doubtless felt that he could scarcely have chosen better if there had been the whole world to choose from. But still, was she the right person? He did not know.

He asked of her a drink, which she gave him; and she then added, "I will draw water also for thy camels until they have done drinking." The man had chosen his test skilfully; for such an offer would not only indicate the right individual, but must also indicate on her part compassion for the beasts and a true kindness of feeling even at the cost of some labor to herself; for the ten camels would require a large supply. The man, full of joy, inquired about her parentage; and learning that she was Rebekah, daughter of Bethuel, his master's nephew, he "bowed down his head and worshipped the Lord." She was immediately presented with rich ornaments for her ears and arms. Having quickly returned home, she informed her brother Laban of what had occurred; and the servant, his attendants and the camels were immediately taken to be sharers in the Oriental hospitality. Food was placed before him; but, before partaking of it, he explained his errand, the circumstances of his arrival, his prayer by the well, and the practical answer to it by the unconscious girl herself. He added, "And now,

if ye will deal kindly and truly with my master, tell me; and if not, tell me; that I may turn to the right hand or to the left." The answer was in the true Eastern fashion; not a full reference to the heart of the girl herself for a decision, but, "The thing proceedeth from the Lord: we cannot speak unto thee bad or good. Behold, Rebekah is before thee; take her, and go, and let her be thy master's son's wife, as the Lord hath spoken."

Even Isaac himself, in all this commission by the servant, seems to have been a secondary personage; certainly was not a principal actor in Canaan, any more than Rebekah was here at Haran. It was all according to Eastern usage, not only in those ancient but also in modern times.

Further presents were made to Rebekah: gifts also, or rather what, according to the Eastern usages, may be called purchase-money, were received by Laban and Bethuel, the latter seemingly a brother named after their father Bethuel; and without any delay—for the servant, knowing his master's anxiety, and how joyful this success would make him, was impatient to be gone—they started for Canaan, Rebekah being accompanied by her nurse and handmaids.

Abraham appears to have been staying at this time at Beersheba, while Isaac was attending to a portion of their large possessions of herds and flocks by the wells of Lahai-roi, in the region immediately adjoining this on the south-east. But now he was on a visit to his father, probably in expectation of the arrival of the messenger sent to Haran. It was an anxious time among all.

"And Isaac went out to meditate in the field at the even-tide; and he lifted up his eyes, and saw, and behold the camels were coming. And Rebekah lifted up her eyes, and when she saw Isaac, she lighted off the camel. For she had said to the servant, What man is this that walketh in the field to meet us; and the servant had said, It is my master; therefore she took a veil and covered herself. And the ser-

vant told Isaac all things that he had done. And Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah's tent, and took Rebekah, and she became his wife; and he loved her; and Isaac was comforted after his mother's death."

CHAPTER XIII.

DEATH OF ABRAHAM.

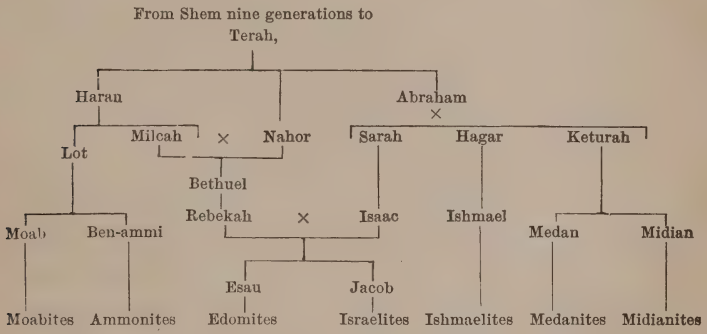
THERE is now, on the outskirts of Hebron at its northern side, a quadrangular enclosure, formed by a massive wall two hundred feet by one hundred and fifty, and sixty feet in height. The large stones composing it are of the white limestone (Josephus calls it marble) of that country, and have on their fronts the raised panel or rebated style of ornament belonging to the Jewish and Phœnician architecture of the ancient times. We see the same style in what remains of the wall supporting the temple enclosure erected by Herod the Great at Mount Moriah, and also of the tower Hippicus built by that king, which now adjoins the Jaffa gate at Jerusalem. This wall at Hebron must certainly date back as far as the time of Herod, and may, not improbably, have been built by Solomon; for Josephus speaks of the structure there as ancient in his time.[1] The place has been so well guarded from remotest antiquity, and the traditions are so uniform and fixed respecting it, that there can be no doubt of its enclosing within its bounds the cave of Machpelah, Abraham's final resting-place.

The aged patriarch died at Hebron, thirty-five years after the marriage of Isaac. Subsequently to this latter event, or, as some commentators believe, previous to it, another wife,

[1] De Bell., iv. 9. § 7.

Keturah by name, had been taken; and by her he had six sons, whom he lived long enough to see grow up, and whom he sent to the regions south and east from Beersheba, so as to prevent any rivalship with Isaac after his own death.

The following curtailed table of genealogies, and of the origin and relationship of nations will be useful now, and in the future progress of this work:



The record of the death of the patriarch, as given in the Bible, is very simple: "Then Abraham gave up the ghost and died in a good old age [one hundred and seventy-five years], an old man and full of years; and was gathered to his people. And his sons, Isaac and Ishmael, buried him in the cave of Machpelah, in the field of Ephron, the son of Zohar the Hittite, which is before Mamre; the field which Abraham purchased of the sons of Heth; there was Abraham buried, and Sarah his wife.". It appears thus that, at the last, Ishmael came back and helped to lay his father's body in its final resting-place.

Thus terminated the life of one who, though a man of mixed character, yet stands before us, and has ever stood before the world, in vast proportions, looked to, studied, quoted and applauded. He is spoken of in the New Testament as "The friend of God."[1] Jehovah himself, speaking

[1] James ii. 23.

through Isaiah, calls him "Abraham, my friend;"[1] Hebron now takes its name from such circumstance, and is called by its Mohammedan owners El-Khalîl, "the friend."

The friend! That was all; and yet what affection, what fulness of trust, what nearness, what joy in intercourse, are comprised in the word! There are no multiplied encomiums upon him in the Scriptures. His faults—even the meanness of his aberration from truth in Egypt and at Gerar—are not covered over, but are told with the same simplicity of record as are his acts of faith. We have seen him in these sketches,—where we have endeavored to view him as a man with human feelings and engaged in every-day human life,—we have seen him as the simple nomadic chief, in person and manners and wants and public rule and domestic action, very similar to the nomadic chiefs of the present day. An Arab sheikh of our time gives us an exhibition of what Abraham was in outward bearing and appearance, probably in intelligence also, as well as in habits of life; for both individuals, the ancient and modern, may be regarded as not largely gifted with what the world calls learning.

But Abraham was *the friend of God.* The word is put before us prominently in the Scriptures, as if for our guidance; and it is indeed a guide. No large endowments had he, mentally, or morally, or physically. His very courage had a flaw in it; his mind had little treasure laid up; the giants at Hebron probably scorned his strength; he fell into weaknesses and sins; but yet he came out high above all, strong above all, wise above all,—because he was "the FRIEND," THE FRIEND OF GOD. It is something in which he can be imitated by all.

The *friend* he was, on the plains at Ur, where, amid a nation of idolaters, he was true, and looked with clear eye up to Jehovah, and obeyed when called. The *friend* he was in

[1] Isa. xli. 8.

Haran, when, amid its wide flowery plains and the attractions of intercourse among relatives, he believed and obeyed, and left all, not knowing whither he was going, but only that God was leading him. The *friend* he was, following the call over those sandy intervening deserts to Damascus, and then away from its richness and beauty, and onward among the giants at Bashan, and so to live among the giants at Hebron, a stranger and helpless, except that he had God's protection, but not doubting that Protector. The *friend* he was, when God called him to sacrifice Isaac, and he went and built the altar, and took the knife and raised it to strike!

Always the friend; trusting, true, faithful. And it was for this that God blessed him and honored him. *Our* friendship to God—what is it? Who can fathom the full depth of its distrusts, and weaknesses, and hesitancies, and of our idol-worship of the world and its belongings, and of our shame and backwardness in acknowledging God, and of our withholding when called to make sacrifices of sins or comforts for him, and of our frequent practical disbelief?

The world has changed greatly since Abraham's time. Centuries of experience have passed over men's heads; history has raised her voice for God; intelligence has been sharpened and strengthened; Jesus has come and given us his divine teachings, and his life and death; we have all means of knowledge and all incentives to trust in God; but among mortals Abraham yet stands alone in the fulness of his undoubting faith; pre-eminent as *The friend of God.*

We return to notice a few items respecting this burying-place at Machpelah, and its surrounding wall. It lies on the southern side of a hill which, rising northwardly from Hebron, ascends to the table-land above. The spot is guarded with most careful jealousy by the Mohammedan owners of that country, whose fanaticism is peculiarly intense with regard to this, one of the most sacred places in their religion. There is a hole in the enclosing wall at its

The Ancient Wall enclosing the Cave of Machpelah; also part of Hebron. Viewed from the South.

foundations near its northwestern corner, and the Jews are allowed there to reach through and touch the native rock, which they can do by lying flat on the ground. This is the only privilege allowed them with regard to this spot. Christians were equally debarred from entering the walls until the visit of the Prince of Wales to Palestine in 1862, when, after negotiations with the Turkish Government and great difficulties thrown in the way, he was allowed, as a token of great favor to the British government, to enter with a suite of seven persons, among them Dean Stanley, who has given an account of the visit. The southern end of the enclosed space is occupied by a Turkish mosque facing toward the north, where is a court or open square, and beyond this, quite at the northern end, is a smaller mosque. In the larger mosque just on the right, as it is entered from the court, is a recess faced with marble and separated from the spectator by a railing of silver; within this is a cenotaph or

raised platform six feet high, and covered with green cloths embroidered in gold. The Turks call it Abraham's tomb; but it is undoubtedly only a monumental representative of what is below. On the opposite side of the mosque is a similar cenotaph for Sarah, similarly guarded and enriched; and further in are cenotaphs of like form for Isaac on the right, and Rebekah on the left; the grating here is not of silver but iron. Beyond the court in the smaller northern building are similar monuments for Jacob and Leah. Near Abraham's cenotaph, outside the railing, in the pavement is a circular hole about eight inches across, at the lower part of which, as far as the visitors could see and feel, was the living rock. "This cavity," says Stanley, "appears to open into a dark space beneath, and that space (which the guardians of the mosque believed to extend under the whole platform) can hardly be anything else than the ancient cave of Machpelah. This was the only aperture which the guardians recognized. A lamp is let down at night and burnt in the place beneath."

Since that visit further explanations have been made by Mons. Pioretti, formerly engineer in the Sardinian army, but at the time of this visit, acting as engineer and architect for Suray Pasha at Jerusalem; and in consequence of his official position having unusual privileges. He says, "The true entrance to the patriarch's tomb is to be seen close to the western wall of the enclosure and near the northwest corner. I observed the Musselmans themselves did not go near it. In the court opposite the entrance of the mosque there is an opening through which I was allowed to go down for three steps, and I was able to ascertain by sight and touch that the rock exists there, and to conclude it to be about five feet thick. From the short observations I could make during my brief descent, as also from consideration of the eastern wall of the mosque and the little information I extracted from the chief Santon who jealously guards the sanctuary, I consider that a part of the grotto exists under

the mosque and that the other part is under the court, but at a lower level than that lying under the mosque. This latter must be separated from the former by a vertical stratum of rock which contains an opening, as I conclude for two reasons; first, because the east wall being entirely solid and massive, it requires a good foundation; second, because the petitions which the Musselmans present to the Santon to be transmitted to the Patriarchs are thrown, some through one opening, some through the other, according to the Patriarch to whom they are directed; and the Santon goes down by the way I went, whence I suppose that on that side there is the vestibule, and that the tombs may be found below it.

"I explained my conjecture to the Santon himself, after leaving the mosque, and he showed himself very much surprised at the time, and told the pacha afterward that I knew more about it than the Turks themselves. The fact is that even the Pacha, who governs the province, has no right to penetrate into the enclosure, where (according to Musselman legend), the patriarchs are living, and only condescend to receive the petitions addressed to them by mortals."

XIV.

ISAAC'S FAMILY.

ISAAC was seventy-five years old when Abraham died. He and Ishmael, after performing the last solemn duty to their father's remains, had turned again toward their homes; Isaac to the well Lahai-roi, about forty miles S. E. from Hebron, and the older brother to his tribe and his family in Arabia. In the Hebrew tribe the aged patriarch was greatly missed; for not only had he been a person who attached himself to all around him, but the belief in the con-

stant communion between God and him had given him a deep sacredness in the regards of all.

The tent of Isaac would now present to the eyes of observers a man amiable and beloved, but lacking the commanding force of his father; a woman, his wife, very beautiful, keenly observant, and quick in resource; and, in addition, two sons, twins, and at Abraham's death fifteen years of age. The mother's regards were always attentively fixed upon them both.

They were almost the opposites of each other in appearance and disposition. One was fond of home and of his mother, and was of course her favorite. The other was a hardy, restless youth, who, disdaining the monotony of the pastoral life and of the tent, took his bow and arrows and roamed over the country, and brought back game to his father with stirring accounts of his adventures and successes in the chase. The latter, who had been the first to make his appearance in the world, was at his birth, covered with hair, and was named from this circumstance *Esau*, "hairy." The other on the same occasion, had his hand on his brother's heel, and was called from this *Jacob*, "holding the heel," a name of unpleasant significance; for the verb whence it is derived means also *to act deceitfully*,[1] *to supplant*. It had previously been declared of them by divine communication to Isaac, that "two manner of people should come from them," and "the elder should serve the younger."

The mother soon became partial. We can scarcely wonder at it, as we see the one child almost deformed by his hairy covering, and the other fair to look upon; the one soon manifesting the rough, bold characteristics so marked in after life, and the other pliant and gentle; the one soon sheltering himself in his rude manners under the father's authority, and the other asking in earnest tones for the mother's help.

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[1] See Gen. xxvii. 36; Jer. ix. 4.

So the children, and afterward the lads, grew up, becoming every day more diverse in character, and, what was most unwise on the part of their superiors, more distinguished in the parental regards.

We can already see trouble darkening in that tent. Esau had the rights of primogeniture; and although these may not have been fully defined at that time, the sentiment which afterward made them fully marked was undoubtedly prevalent at an early date. As we see these rights afterward in Jewish history, they were, 1, honor and authority next to that belonging to parents (Gen. xlix. 3); 2, peculiar consecration to God (Ex. xxii. 29); 3, priority in priestly office (Levit. viii. 2: Num. viii. 17); and 4, a double portion of the father's goods (Deut. xxi. 17).

The sons had advanced beyond boyhood and were beginning to be mature in character, when one day, the older brother coming home from the chase faint and hungry, found the other engaged in the less manly occupation of cooking a mess of lentiles or beans,[1] the odor of which was most tempting to the keen appetite of the huntsman. He asked immediately for some of the food, and the astuteness of Jacob was awakened. The latter said,

"Sell me this day thy birthright."

"Behold, I am at the point to die, and what profit shall this birthright be to me," was the characteristic, careless reply of Esau.

"Swear to me this day," said Jacob; and Esau swore; and he sat down and ate and drank, and then rose up and went his way.

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[1] Robinson says, in his visit to Akabah, not very far from this, "We bought little except a supply of lentiles or small beans, which are common in Egypt and Syria under the name of *Adas;* the same from which the pottage was made for which Esau sold his birthright. We found them very palatable, and could well conceive that to a weary hunter faint with hunger they must be quite a dainty."

He had sold that on which he placed little value; for even the right of chief inheritance was of slight moment to one who could range freely over the world, and find subsistence everywhere, and to whom the care of flocks and herds would only be an encumbrance; but to the young man at home, calculating in his disposition, already shrewd, and always jealous of his brother's priority, it was a great triumph; one which was doubtless shared also by the watchful mother. The triumph was the greater in Jacob's estimation because Esau had obtained those birthrights by only a few minutes' precedence in life; and the younger knew that he could turn to good account what his brother esteemed so lightly. Jacob had often fretted over the difference between him and his brother in this matter of priority; and from his mind's dwelling so much on the subject, the rights of primogeniture had taken, in his view, even greater importance than they deserved. He thought now with great joy, that they were all his own!

A drought and famine in this higher region at Lahai-roi, which was particularly subject to the influence of heat, now drove Isaac and his family into the lower country belonging to the Philistines, bordering on the Mediterranean. The divine communication had directed him not to go to Egypt, but to stop in this place; he went to Gerar, where Abimelech—probably not the king in Abraham's time—was then the ruler. Here again, with regard to his wife, was practised the same base deception that we have seen in his father's case with respect to Sarah; and he called Rebekah his sister, "Because she was fair to look upon,"[1] and he

[1] Miss Martineau, speaking of the Jews whom she saw at Hebron, says, "Here and at Jerusalem, and elsewhere, we saw many Jews with fair complexions, blue eyes and light hair. Such eyes I never saw as both the blue and the brown; soft, noble eyes such as bring tears into one's own, one knows not why. The form of the face was unusually fine, and the complexion clear brown or fair; the hair beautiful."

feared that her beauty might bring him into danger, if the true facts were known. A timely discovery by the king, however, saved both from the effects of this base lying; and Abimelech, with upbraidings which ought to have been keenly felt by them, gave them the royal protection, with threats of severest punishment to any of his subjects who might do them harm. A feeling of awe connected with this Hebrew race seems to have impressed itself on all their neighbors; just as now, all over the world, there is a sentiment akin to this, however in other respects we may regard this people;—a feeling tinged with awe, an unacknowledged and perhaps resisted feeling of respect as for a mysterious power connected with them. They are a living, strange enigma in our midst. That same feeling appears to have seized upon their neighbors then,—upon the nobles at Mamre and upon the king of the Philistines. The Hebrews were shrunk from, yet tolerated and treated with tenderness; were respected but not loved; they seem to have given no love to others. Doubtless the often-expected assurances from God that he would give to their posterity all this land, were known with more or less distinctness among their neighbors, for such things could scarcely be kept secret. The assurances had just been repeated to Isaac himself, with the mysterious declaration, "And in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed." These things known to their neighbors, a jealousy, a suspicion, a strange fear, and yet with them, a disposition to honor and treat with tenderness, but not with love, a people so honored of heaven and so linked in with promises of future power and glory, must have prevailed among the surrounding nations or tribes.

Isaac remained in the country of the Philistines, and "waxed great, and went forward and grew until he became very great; for he had possessions of flocks and herds and great store of servants, and the Philistines envied him."

The king there finally said, "Go from us; for thou art much mightier than we."

He went leisurely along eastwardly, digging successive wells for his flocks; but the people of the country had become sensitive in their jealousy of his increasing greatness, and contested the wells with his herdsmen, falsely claiming them as their own on account of previous occupancy. He yielded peaceably, retiring until at last (the drought in this long interval having ceased) he reached the well-remembered spot of his father's residence at Beersheba. He knew it well indeed; for from this place he had been conducted by his father to Moriah for the intended sacrifice, where he was to be the victim; and here his mother had hung around his neck with tears of joy and gratitude when he was restored to her and she heard of the fearful command to slay him on the altar, and how nearly it had been fulfilled. Isaac himself now erected an altar at Beersheba, and called upon the name of the Lord and pitched his tent at that place.

He had a visit here from the Philistine king, Abimelech, accompanied by a friend and by Phicol, the chief captain of his army; and the interview was strikingly characteristic of the feelings on both sides.

"Wherefore come ye to me," he said, "seeing ye hate me, and have sent me away from you?" They replied,

"We saw certainly that the Lord was with thee; and we said, Let there be now an oath betwixt us, even betwixt us and thee, and let us make a covenant with thee; that thou wilt do us no hurt, as we have not touched thee, and as we have done unto thee nothing but good, and have sent thee away in peace; thou art now the blessed of the Lord."

"And he made them a feast, and they did eat and drink."

He might well feel himself blessed of the Lord; for as he stood by his tent, his eyes could range over flocks and herds far and wide, and over a tribe of retainers so numerous as to give him importance whether as friend or adver-

sary. He knew also that this sentiment of awe and respect and fear as for one strangely favored from on high had taken possession of his neighbors, though mingled with jealousy. Their jealousy was a compliment. Their dislike, grounded as it was on apprehension, he might also feel to be complimentary to his power as the sheikh of a powerful tribe.

But a domestic trouble here broke in upon his complacency and enjoyment. Esau, reckless of the wishes of both father and mother, had taken two wives from the adjoining Hittite tribes, idolaters who would lead off this ever-wayward man from the worship of the true God. He was still the favorite son of the father; for his bold, frank manner, his daring in the chase, his manliness and even his restiveness under restraint making the father's stronger power necessary as a curb, had endeared him to Isaac, who marked the contrast to all this in Jacob's timidity and astuteness, and his gentleness, and partiality for his mother. Esau and Jacob were forty years old and Isaac was an hundred, when this connexion by marriage with the Canaanites took place. The wives were brought to the father's tent and became part of the household, creating still greater discomfort in the family than had existed before. The oldest son, however, was ill adapted by previous habits to settle down into the ways of quiet pastoral life, and his precarious means of living by hunting made it necessary to domesticate his family where there were surer means of subsisting. Rebekah fretted under the intrusion.

CHAPTER XV.

THE STOLEN BLESSING.

YEARS passed on;—thirty-seven years after this marriage of Esau, his own unsettled habits still unchanged, and his Hittite wives still causing, as may well be imagined, great discomfort to his mother. Jacob had now reached his seventy-seventh year,[1] and had not yet taken a wife. His mother's love had so far been sufficient for him; his quiet home-feelings found sufficient enjoyment in her society; probably the conduct of the Hittite wives of his brother made him feel that he was the more necessary to her, and made him averse to looking for a nearer companion for himself. Suddenly there was a great disruption in the domestic circle, and the quiet, domestic man was compelled to flee from home. The cause was one which brings the full character of this family to our view.

The father was now one hundred and thirty-seven years old, and the infirmities of age were taking strong hold on him; as an especial and grievous affliction, his eyesight had almost entirely failed. Unable to distinguish objects, confined to his couch, and feeling that even the shreds of life were scarcely left to him, he determined, while his faculties would permit it, to place his first-born in safe possession of the position belonging to him in the family and tribe. Con-

[1] These numbers, and others connected with them, differ from those given by some commentators, but they seem to be unavoidable, and are deduced thus: Joseph was promoted in Egypt *æt.* 30 (Gen. xli. 46). Nine years afterward his father came to Egypt (Gen. xlv. 6), Joseph *æt.* 39; Jacob was then 130 years old (xlvii. 9); consequently Jacob was 91 years old at Joseph's birth; he had then been 14 years in Padan Aram (compare Gen. xxx. 24 with xxxi. 38); and was therefore 77 at the time of the above occurrences.

sequently he summoned him one day, as he supposed, in private.

"My son," he said, and paused so as to discriminate by the voice; for his eyes had failed so much that he could no longer judge by sight.

"Behold, here I am," said Esau, and the tones of voice were satisfactory.

"Behold, now I am old, I know not the day of my death; now, therefore, take, I pray thee, thy weapons, thy quiver and thy bow, and go out to the field and take me some venison; and make me savory meat, such as I love, and bring it to me, that I may eat; that my soul may bless thee before I die."

Esau took his instruments for hunting and went out. The interview, however, was not secret, for Rebekah had overheard every word.

Well, indeed, might she be alarmed! She knew from the old man's favoritism, and from the son's claims of birthright, what the blessing would be. It would be the placing of the bold, and to her often rebellious, Esau over the household, and would be giving additional haughtiness and power to his heathen wives in the tent, and moreover, would be the humiliation of Jacob before all the tribe. She hurried secretly to the latter, told him all that had occurred, and gave him instructions what to do. He was to go to the flock and bring home two good kids, with which she was to make savory meat for the old man, which he was to present as the desired venison. "But, behold, Esau my brother," he objected, "is a hairy man, and I am a smooth man; my father, peradventure, will feel me, and I shall seem to him as a deceiver; and I shall bring a curse upon me and not a blessing." She replied,

"Upon me be thy curse, my son; only obey my voice and go and fetch them."

There was need for expedition; for at any moment the

older brother might return. The kids were brought and the savory mess prepared. She took some of Esau's best garments and put them on Jacob, and with the skins of the kids covered his hands and the exposed parts of his neck, so as to represent, as far as possible, the hairiness of the older son. And so the mess was taken in to the old man, while his wife, all nervous, and anxious and trembling with fear, tried both to watch the proceedings within the tent and to guard against any intrusions from without. Jacob approached his father with no less fear; for it was a perilous experiment that he was making. His heart quaked under the consciousness of the lying and deception. If he should be discovered, a curse would ensue such as his mother, though offering to bear it could yet never cancel. We can imagine the scene ;—the keenly watchful mother quivering with nervous apprehension at every motion; the son self-condemned and frightened at the terrible position he was in ; feigning composure, while he knew that he was shaking with dread; contending for a mastery over himself and his voice, and while fiercely struggling, yet under the necessity of appearing natural and easy; appalled by the very quiet and silence and dimness in the room, yet knowing that an interruption would bring to him a fearful curse instead of a blessing. The old man's helplessness and blindness were pathetic appeals to any heart. Jacob had to steel himself against all such affection.—There was need of haste. He broke the silence:

"My father!"

"Here am I; who art thou, my son?"

"I am Esau, thy first-born. I have done according as thou badest me. Arise, I pray thee, sit and eat of my venison, that thy soul may bless me."

"How is it that thou hast found it so quickly, my son?"

"Because the Lord thy God brought it to me."

"Come near, I pray thee, that I may feel thee, my son, whether thou be my very son Esau, or not."

The words, and especially the allusion to God as helper, had burnt the lips of the son as he spake them, but his astuteness bore him through. He approached, deeply agitated; but the old man's touch was itself a trembling and feeble one from his debility. He felt him, and said,

"The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are the hands of Esau; art thou my very son Esau?"

"I am."

"Bring it near to me, and I will eat of my son's venison, that my soul may bless thee."

It was brought, with wine also, and he ate and drank. Then the old man said,

"Come near, now, and kiss me, my son."

He did so; and there seems to have been a peculiar odor from Esau's raiment, which was perceived by the father.

Then came the blessing:

"See, the smell of my son is as the smell of a field which the Lord hath blessed; therefore God give thee of the dew of heaven, and the fatness of the earth, and plenty of corn and wine; let people serve thee, and nations bow down to thee; be lord over thy brethren and let thy mother's sons bow down to thee; cursed be every one that curseth thee, and blessed be he that blesseth thee."

Jacob went out rich in his father's words, but poor in his own heart, for he had stripped it of nobleness and truth, and of that consciousness which is man's best support. He joined his mother, and as their eyes met, amid the triumph which brightened them, there was the deep self-condemnation springing from joint participation in an unmitigated wickedness. They had lied to and grossly deceived the infirm, blind, good old man, the husband and father. How often, afterward, must Jacob have thought of this scene

when his own sons were stinging his heart, and whitening his hairs by their wicked acts!

During these proceedings in the tent, Esau had been ranging over the hills for game, and had been successful. He hoped now to be repaid for the loss of his birthright which he had formerly so weakly and impulsively sold. He had thought often, since, of that act, which had taken in his eyes a more serious character as years had passed on and he had wives and children, for whose sake he could now see the value of the chief inheritance; his own habits being so adverse to finding means for their support. His wives, who had made themselves hateful to his mother, might indeed have no certain home after his father's death, unless it might now be secured. But now his father, he hoped, would fully cancel the sale of that birthright. He had asked for the venison, "that my soul may bless thee before I die." Assuredly it would be a great blessing, this, the final one; it would doubtless place him at the head of the family and of the tribe. He would yet triumph over his cunning brother!

Such thoughts spurred on the huntsman over hill and across valley, until the venison was secured. He returned then, quickly, and made with it the savory mess such as he had often before prepared. It was well for Jacob and his mother that they had used expedition; for the former was scarcely out of the old man's presence, when the other son came before him in the tent. Isaac was resting after the recent unwonted effort; the divine afflatus which he had felt within him was passed; he felt happy in the consciousness of what had just transpired; this son was his favorite; the eldest born, he believed, was now safe in the rich blessing which God had, through him, bestowed. He heard suddenly a movement in the tent, as of one approaching, and then the words,

"Let my father arise, and eat of his son's venison, that thy soul may bless me."

"Who art thou?"

"I am thy son, thy first-born, Esau." The old man trembled with exceeding agitation: he recognized the voice.

"Who? where is he that hath taken venison, brought it me, and I have eaten of all before thou camest, and have blessed him? yea, and he shall be blessed."

The oldest born raised "a great and exceeding bitter cry." When he could find words, they were in deepest anguish,—

"Bless me, even me also, O my father!"

The old man's anguish was not less keen:

"Thy brother came with subtilty, and hath taken away thy blessing."

"Is he not rightly named Jacob" [the Supplanter]? said Esau; "for he hath supplanted me these two times; he took away my birthright; and behold now he hath taken away my blessing." He cried then in that bitterness of despair which only such a heart can know—

"Hast thou not reserved a blessing for me?" The answer came—

"Behold, I have made him thy lord, and all his brethren have I given him for servants; with corn and wine have I sustained him; and what shall I do now unto thee, my son?"

"Hast thou but one blessing, my father? bless me, even me also, O my father!" "And Esau lifted up his voice and wept."

The father's tears must have been as bitter; for not only had he failed in rightly bestowing the blessing, but he felt also the heinousness of the deception practised upon him by the twin-born. He answered—

"Behold, thy dwelling shall be the fatness of the earth, and of the dew of heaven from above. And by thy sword shalt thou live and shalt serve thy brother; and it shall

come to pass when thou shalt have the dominion, that thou shalt break his yoke from off thy neck."

Both father and son felt that the blessing so strangely misdirected must have its way, and could not be recalled.

What is lost is apt to take additional value in our eyes because it is lost. So Esau's mind brooded over these late scenes until, in addition to hatred toward his brother, an intense desire for revenge grew up in his heart. He was not naturally revengeful, but frank and manly; but this very frankness and manliness helped now to fill the measure of his disgust and abhorrence toward one who had supplanted him by trick and treachery. In his rage he uttered dark threats against the life of Jacob. Any check imposed on him by his father's presence he believed would soon be removed by the death of the latter. "Then," in his usual frankness and his intense hatred, he said, "I will slay my brother Jacob."

But the mother's love for her favorite made her keenly watchful of all Esau's proceedings and his words. The tent was indeed in a turmoil of feeling; all peace had departed from it. The old man, feeble and blind and now distrustful of all, was overwhelmed by sadness; he could only listen and grieve. All else was reciprocal wrath; he lay fearful and trembling for the possible result. Esau could not be a counsellor to him; Rebekah had helped to betray him; Jacob was too artful and selfish to be trusted; whom could he trust?

His wife roused him from this stupor of body and mind and heart. She stood by his side and the tones of her voice indicated fretfulness and anger; both feelings were partly real, partly assumed. "I am weary of my life," she said, "because of the daughters of Heth [the two Hittites]; if Jacob take a wife of the daughters of Heth, such as these which are of the daughters of the land, what good shall my life do me?" Doubtless they had, with sharp tongues, been

venting upon her some of their husband's and their own spleen; but her words came more from a fear for Jacob than from her own personal discomfort. Her watchful attention had brought to her a knowledge of Esau's threats; she had sent for her favorite and had advised him to flee to her brother Laban in Haran, with the counsel, "Tarry with him a few days until thy brother's fury turn away; . . . . then will I send and fetch thee from thence. Why should I be deprived also of you both in one day?" Esau, indeed, was not apt to harbor revengeful feelings for a long while, but they were the more violent when they did rule him; his mode of life made him open and forgiving, but his indignation and hatred while they lasted were the more deadly.

The father sent for Jacob, and directed him to go to Padan-Aram (Haran), and take as a wife there one of the daughters of Laban, brother of his mother: "And God Almighty bless thee, and make thee fruitful, and multiply thee, that thou mayest be a multitude of people; and give thee the blessing of Abraham, to thee and to thy seed with thee, that thou mayest inherit the land wherein thou art a stranger, which God gave unto Abraham."

So the son went forward on his long journey in sadness and loneliness, and yet with a feeling of relief. This was not a pleasant home to him any more. Even in his mother's presence there was a feeling of self-condemnation, which he knew she also must have in her own heart; and there was the mutual distrust even of each other, such as people always have when they have been accomplices in premeditated iniquitous acts.

Esau, seeing how distasteful to the father his marriage with the Hittite women had been, went now to Arabia and procured there as wife a daughter of his half-uncle Ishmael; but after a while he took his wives, and doubtless also a share of the flocks and removed to a mountainous country about forty-five miles east from Beersheba; and settling there, soon

became the head of a tribe. It was called after him, Edom (Gen. xxv. 30; xxxvi. 1), and was a fertile region, intersected by deep, wooded valleys, with which his hunting expeditions must have made him familiar. The fact of his going there for a permanent home was itself a sinful slighting of the promises of God to Abraham and Isaac with regard to Canaan as an inheritance for their descendants. Indeed, the tribe eventually became idolaters.

Ishmael was now prospering in Arabia. He became there the father of twelve sons, each of whom was made a prince of a district or tribe.

CHAPTER XVI.

JACOB IN EXILE.

JACOB'S heart felt relieved of a weight when he had left that tent behind him, although he was not sure that Esau, skilled in the chase and in the use of weapons, might not pursue him or be lying in wait amid uninhabited spots, where murder could be so easily concealed. But he passed on, mile after mile, without interruption; and at last the long distance intervening gave him more assurance of safety; and he slackened his pace, and had time to think.

Thinking is not often pleasant after a wicked act; for even success and triumph are then dashed with bitterness. He tried to justify himself for that deed by his father's bedside; and arguments came, as they always will come in any unrighteous cause, when they are called for. His very name, he saw, had always been suggestive to him of *supplanting*,—the meaning that Esau himself had given to it in his indignation, and which must often have been sportively or angrily given to it by others. Such a character-

istic, therefore, seemed to be impressed upon him by his name itself, and that name derived from a significant circumstance at birth.

He argued also, as he went along, how utterly unfit Esau was for such a last, formal blessing. The manner in which that brother had bartered away his birthright showed how little value he would place on any blessing; and indeed, it seemed as if no blessing could avail, unless it would also change the character and life of the reckless man. Then also, it was only a few minutes' precedence in birth that gave him any claim; and that claim, through indifference to it by its owner, seemed to have been altogether forfeited in favor of the twin-brother, who prized the father's blessing above all other things in life.

So Jacob could argue, as he travelled on in that journey, left now to shape his future away from the influences of home, which indeed seem never to have been of the best kind, whether we consider the mother's injudicious partiality toward himself, the father's leaning toward the reckless brother, or that brother's selfish disregard of the comfort of others. Jacob's home education had not been a good one.

A thought will probably here occur to the reader's mind, and assume the shape of the query, "Why were such men chosen to be the demonstration for God before the world?"

The best answer perhaps is, that He took those who were *willing*. Abraham was willing, and although a man full of weaknesses, was, even with them, still the friend of God. Isaac was willing, though also a man of weakness. And so was Jacob. None of them were perfect; all of them weak, yet *willing*. So Jacob was taken now, and God's blessing came upon him.

We are to judge those men, also, not by the improved knowledge in our time, when we have libraries of books in which God in history through near six thousand years can be read, and when we have also the greatest of all teachings

through Christ, God himself manifest in examples and lessons of instruction worthy of the Divinity; but we must look back and see those men with no advantages of books, and without teachings except what they received in the infrequent, direct communications from heaven. These communications scarcely glanced at doctrines or at information, but were more in the manner of calls to action and of promises adapted to encourage and sustain these exceptional men in adherence to God, while the whole world around them was given to idolatry. Little these individuals knew, little could they know, of doctrines to inform, or principle to guide, or even of reasons to give for their acts, further than that God had spoken and called them to act. Such were the circumstances of the men whom we are here considering; and in forming our judgment of them, it should have reference to their position and their opportunities for information. Indeed, if we compare our obedience in connection with our means for knowledge, with their obedience in connection with their means for knowledge, we shall perhaps wonder that they did so well.

We turn now to look at this solitary traveller as he journeys on, full of thought; for his life had been one adapted to cultivate much thinking and deep and sober feelings. We imagine his thoughts; now eddying around his angry, sternly-resolved brother; now by the bedside of his blind, sad father; now resting on his mother with a gush of precious remembrances; and now striding far off before him and trying to make out something of his future at Haran. His mind amid all this, also, felt darkly around for God; darkly, for how could he know? or how see clearly? or how form any other than confused notions of God? With his apprehensions so dim, as respected doctrine or duty, or even the sure lines of rectitude, or true principle for action, he was however wishing to look to God, and willing to be led. What other leader had he now? He was alone in the world.

Thus he journeyed on, passing Hebron and by Moriah; in the evening he came to Bethel, the high ground noted already in this book as the place where Abraham had twice encamped, and where he and Lot had separated. Here Jacob paused for the night,—probably his second night from home,—as Bethel is distant from Beersheba about fifty-five miles. Preparations for a night's rest are still easily made in that country; the girdle of cloth or leather unclasped, and rolled together and laid on some stones, and the *simlah*, an oblong piece of cloth for a covering, being all that is deemed necessary as a preparation; the earth offering itself as a sufficiently soft couch. So Jacob, after his light supper, laid down for needed rest.

We have just been trying to follow his thoughts, and have seen the solitary man feeling his loneliness in the world, and querying about God. And as he was lying on that hill-top, in the deep silence of night, with the stars looking down upon him and seeming to have such abundant companionship among themselves, he might indeed feel lonely, and he might ask whether he was seen of God? or would have help from God?

He slept soon, and there was a dream that might well be considered an answer to such thoughts. It was adapted to his simple apprehension; for there was a raised ladder before him that reached to heaven, and on it angels were passing to and fro between the heaven and the earth. And then, as he looked, "Behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac; the land wherein thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed. And thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth; and thou shalt spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south; and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land:

for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of."

He waked from his dream and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not." He gazed about him. There were again around him the dim forms of earthly objects, and above him the dark vault of night; the ladder was gone, and the angels were no longer seen, nor God heard; but he felt now that the space around him was peopled with spirits, and that God was looking on him kindly, and was also not far off. So now, in that deep stillness, an awe came upon him, compelling from him the utterance, "How holy[1] is this place! This is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." When the earliest morning light came he rose, and placing on end the stone which had been his pillow, he poured oil on it according to a custom by which they dedicated such spots to divine worship, and offered inducement to the Being thus invoked to make his especial residence there. He called the place Bethel, (*Beth*, a house, and *El*, God), and we hear him then in a vow, which many a one since, when going on uncertain enterprises, has been ready to repeat, "If God will be with me, and will keep me in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father's house in peace; then shall the Lord be my God; and this stone, which I have set for a pillar, shall be God's house; and of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee."

We observe him now with deeply increased interest, as he goes forward on his journey; for we feel that there is an especial Presence with him more distinctly marked, and a more conspicuous interest in him by the angels; he was not solitary, though his human eyes did not any longer see those watchful forms. Yet he was only a man, and a weak, and

[1] The Hebrew word means *fearful, worthy of reverence, holy.*

as we have seen, an erring, man; but he was wishing to serve God, and the Deity through that wish was accepting him and was keeping him for great and wonderful purposes.

His course thence was, doubtless, along the way by which Abraham had come from Haran to Shechem; that is, by Damascus, then through the sandy region to the rich plains by the Euphrates, and across that stream to the forks of its tributary, the Belik, which brought him to the neighborhood of his relatives. He saw, on arriving there, some flocks lying by a well, waiting to be watered, and on inquiring of their keepers to what place they belonged, they replied to Haran. He asked,

"Know ye Laban, the son of Nahor?"

"We know him."

"Is he well?"

"He is well, and behold, Rachel, his daughter, cometh with the sheep."

"Lo, it is yet high day, neither is it time that the cattle should be gathered together; water ye the sheep and go and feed them," he said, for he would have preferred that the first meeting between his cousin and himself should have been without so many spectators. They replied, according to the rule for watering in that country, where all must be entitled to a proper share,

"We cannot until all the flocks be gathered together and till they roll the stone from the well's mouth; then we water the sheep."

Rachel, the keeper of her father's flocks, was seen approaching. She was very beautiful. Jacob gazed, and his eyes drank in the beauty of her face, the gracefulness of her movements, the lively but modest expression of her countenance, the elegance, as it appeared to him, of her form. He seems to have been in love at the first sight. Nor was she less struck by his ready gallantry; for he hurried to the well, rolled the stone from its mouth, and watered her sheep.

Then he kissed her, and "lifted up his voice and wept." It was such a blessed termination to his journey!—this beautiful girl, and this meeting her where she needed help, and where he had such a favorable opportunity of introducing himself by a kindness which she could not but receive. We may believe too that it was very pleasantly received. He told her then who he was and his relationship to her; and she hurried off to communicate the intelligence to her father. His uncle on the introduction was also pleased with the young man, who we may believe was of good personal appearance; for he came from a handsome stock, certainly at least on his mother's and grandmother's side.

Jacob was soon made to feel at home in the family; and at the end of a month's hospitality, his uncle Laban proposed to hire him, and asked him what wages he would require. There could be only one answer to the question:—*he asked for Rachel.* She had a sister Leah, but Rachel had been his first love, and she was also the more beautiful of the two. It was customary then, as it still is, in those countries, to pay for a wife; and the suitor in this case, a refugee from home, where he had escaped, probably by stealth, from Esau, had nothing to give but labor. The father of the girl,—a hard, selfish man, saw the strength of the suitor's affection, and imposed severe terms—a service of seven years, at the end of which time Rachel, Laban said, should be his. Jacob agreed to it, and took charge of the sheep. We are told, however, that the seven years "seemed unto him but a few days, for the love that he bore to her." Doubtless Rachel was not willing to give up her former employment, and often went out to assist him in the care of the flocks. The flocks, too, increased very greatly under Jacob's care, and would soon need additional help. The employment, though requiring care, was not severe, and allowed plenty of leisure. The beautiful plains sprinkled, most of the year, with a rich carpet of flowers; the resources

of music on the wide pasture-grounds or in Laban's house; and the pleasant intercourse of lovers; all this would well make time pass agreeably to persons situated as Jacob and the beautiful Rachel were. But, as the end of the seven years approached, Laban's hard selfishness began to resolve itself into a plot against the two young people and for his own advantage. Formerly he had not been as prosperous as the branch of the family in Canaan,[1] and his possessions had been small; but since Jacob's arrival he had fast been growing into wealth, as wealth was there estimated; therefore he determined to cheat the young man into another service of seven years. We may believe that he would feel slighter compunctions about it after learning from Jacob's own lips, in the frequent evening home-narratives, how the latter had procured the birth-right and the father's blessing intended for his brother. Treachery to Jacob now would only be paying him back after his own way. So when the seven years were passed, and Jacob had claimed his bride, and the marriage feast, to which "all the men of the place" were invited, had been made, and the bride had been delivered, the son-in-law found, next morning, that Leah had been substituted in his tent for Rachel, and had become his bride.

The scene of anger and reproaches in the general family, and of meek shame on the part of Leah, need not be dwelt upon here. The reason given by Laban,—that it was not the custom of the country to give the younger daughter before the first-born,—had to be received, whether satisfactory or not; and his proposal to give Rachel now, on condition of seven years' further service, was accepted; and the latter also became Jacob's wife.

Thus seven additional years were passed, attended not only with a rapid increase in Laban's flocks, but also to the

[1] Compare Gen. xxx. 30 with Ibid xxvi. 14.

same degree in Jacob's family. For each of his two wives had offered him her female servant as concubine, and to these children were also born, as well as to the wives; so that, at the end of this time, Jacob was the father of eleven sons and one daughter; the former named, according to the order of their birth, Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun and Joseph,[1] the last being up to this time the only child of Rachel. He said now to Laban, "Send me away, that I may go unto mine own place, and to my own country;" and indeed he had reason to be tired of his selfish father-in-law, who had kept him strictly to his bargain of service, and thus pecuniarily poor, while Laban had seen his own wealth constantly growing under Jacob's judicious care. "Give me my wives and children," said the latter, now, "for whom I have served thee, and let me go; for thou knowest my service which I have done thee." But the shrewd father-in-law was not willing to part with him so readily, and proposed to hire him, leaving to his own choice the manner of receiving his wages. The offer was accepted, Jacob choosing all in the flocks which were, or in future might be, naturally marked after a certain manner, intending, by a method which he had seen or heard of, to secure to himself the largest number and the best in the increase of the sheep and goats. We leave to naturalists to determine whether his method was philosophical or not; but the fact soon became evident that the rule to which Laban had agreed was very rapidly multiplying his son-in-law's portion with the best and strongest in the flocks, while his own showed no increase

[1] The names were given by Jacob's wives, and are all significant. Reuben means, *Behold, a son;* Simeon, *hearing, i. e.*, God had heard her, because she was slighted; Levi, *joined;* Judah, a *confessor,* one who acknowledged God; Dan, *judging;* Naphtali, *my wrestling;* Gad, *prosperity;* Asher, *blessedness;* Issachar, *wages;* Zebulun, *dwelling;* Joseph, *adding.* A daughter, the only one, was called Dinah, *judgment.*

in numbers, and those which came to him were sickly and weak. Jacob had taken care to select the pasture-grounds for his own people at three days' journey from those of Laban, foreseeing that difficulties would probably arise, where there must be so much cause for jealousies and complaints between the two. Six years under this new system of wages saw a great change in the condition of the younger man. He had "increased exceedingly, and had much cattle and maid-servants and man-servants and camels and asses." The prosperous are always admired; adherents gathered to him, and he was becoming a sheikh of consequence among those pastoral tribes.

Such a state of things between the two could not last much longer. Laban's sons were heard muttering, "Jacob hath taken away all that which was our father's; and of that which was our father's hath he gotten all this glory;" and he saw the countenance of Laban, always hard in its selfishness, darkening toward him more and more.

A divine intimation that it was time to return to Canaan, and that he would be protected from above in such efforts, now came to him, and brought matters to a quick decision. He had need of such a promise to cheer him; for difficulties were around him and must also meet him on the way. He had left his brother at home bent on his destruction, and he would have, in that country, to meet dangers the extent of which he now was unable to judge. He had escaped at that time because he was alone; but he had now a large family, and was encumbered by a numerous retinue, and had flocks that might well excite Esau's cupidity, and sharpen the desire for violence and blood. Here, his father-in-law was scowling upon him, and his wives' brothers were growing into a jealousy and fierceness that only wanted a good excuse for stripping him of possessions to which they believed they had the greater right; they might easily find coadjutors in that country in deeds of violence or blood,

if plunder could be obtained. Jacob did not belong to that country; his retainers were bound to him only by interest, and would probably desert him in any emergency of peril. Dangers were threatening him, whether in the alternative to go or stay; but here they were getting every day to be more pressing, and God had moreover promised him protection in Canaan. But how was he to escape from this place without bringing about an open rupture and a catastrophe? His faculty in stratagem again came to his relief. He waited until the shearing-time had come, when Laban, with his sons, he knew, was busy with his sheep at home. There was a three days' journey between Jacob's flocks and those of his father-in-law. The former now called his two wives to the field, where there could be a secret consultation without danger of being overheard, and said,

"I see your father's countenance that it is not toward me as before; but the God of my father hath been with me;" and he went on to recapitulate the transactions between him and Laban. They replied,

"Is there yet any portion or inheritance for us in our father's house? Are we not counted of him strangers? He hath sold us, and hath quite devoured also our money. For all the riches which God hath taken from our father, that is ours and our children's; now then, whatsoever God hath said unto thee, do."

Preparations for a sudden flight for Canaan were therefore immediately and stealthily made. Among their own domestic goods which his wives took care to secure, Rachel, without Jacob's knowledge, concealed also the teraphim (*penates*) or household gods of her father. Laban's family were doubtless to some extent idolaters; and we may wonder that Jacob, in his twenty years' familiar intercourse with them, was not himself infected by their example. The images in this case appear to have been the small idols or figures in human shape of which we have notice in other

parts of Scripture;[1] and Rachel may, in addition to her wish to possess them for her own use, have been anxious to keep from her father the means which she probably thought they might afford him of gaining, by consulting them, a knowledge of their purpose and of the course in their flight.

Teraphim or Household Idols.

Jacob on this occasion would need the exercise of all his astuteness; for such an act of secret departure would convey to the minds of others a consciousness in him of meditated wrong, and would readily form excuse for plundering him of all his hard-earned possessions. So he made his preparations cautiously and secretly. His flocks and herds were quietly drawn together; and while he and his family remained behind, were probably moved some distance onward in the course he was purposing to take—an act which would not necessarily create suspicion in a country where general movements to new pasturage were of frequent occurrence. Then, when the proper time had come, his wives and children were placed on camels fit for rapid and convenient motion, his domestic establishment was broken up, his tents were packed for quick transportation, and he took his course

[1] See Judges xvii. 15; xviii. 14 and 20; 1 Sam. xix. 13 and 16; 2 Kings xxiii. 24.

at once across the Euphrates and toward the southwest. It was not till the third day afterward that Laban, in the midst of his sheep-shearing, was informed of this abandonment of their home by his son-in-law and family. An examination of the circumstances made the truth, at last, flash upon his mind; a further investigation, probably an effort to consult his *teraphim*, led also to the discovery that his gods were missing. We may imagine the explosions of wrath which followed; but there was little time for the indulgence of such feelings. He dropped all work at home, and having gathered a company of friends sufficient for aggressive movements, started in pursuit. The flying party had, however, used all possible expedition, and when on the seventh day of his endeavor to overtake them, he reached the outskirts of their flocks, they were already across the sandy wastes, and in the hilly country of the fertile region of Bashan. But, although he had the offenders now before him and their rich possessions were a most tempting sight, his hands were stayed. Just previous to this meeting, "God came to Laban, the Syrian, in a dream by night, and said unto him, Take heed that thou speak not to Jacob, either good or bad."

Whatever violence he may have meditated;—for he had come with a retinue of his people sufficient for such purpose,—he was now restrained from any such action; but he let his fierce wrath take words. The scene is characteristic;—the selfish man feeling himself despoiled, and glaring at the large flocks of Jacob with greedy eyes, but restrained by his dream; his rage about the loss of his gods, who, stolen and concealed by these people, seemed to invite him to violence; his vacillation between fear and anger;—the son-in-law cautious, but at last giving way to his long pent-up feelings, in which he felt that under the heavenly shelter he might now indulge.

"What hast thou done," said the despoiled man, "that

thou hast stolen away unawares to me, and carried away my daughters, as captives taken with the sword? Wherefore didst thou flee away secretly, and steal away from me, and didst not tell me, that I might have sent thee away with mirth, and with songs, with tabret and with harp? and hast not suffered me to kiss my sons, and my daughters? Thou hast now done foolishly in so doing. It is in the power of my hand to do you hurt; but—" and he then mentioned how he had been warned by the dream. "And now," he continued, "though thou wouldest needs be gone, because thou sore longest after thy father's house, yet wherefore hast thou stolen my gods?"

Jacob briefly answered, "Because I was afraid; for I said, peradventure, thou wouldest take by force thy daughters from me," and then in his feeling of conscious innocence, said, "With whomsoever thou findest thy gods, let him not live;" and invited him to a search. They were at this time encamped, each woman having her separate tent, and Laban searched those of Leah and the two concubines without success. Rachel had concealed the images beneath the couch on which she was reclining, and she gave reasons of delicacy for not rising, which he admitted; and therefore the search in this tent was also futile.

There had been a time of trepidation and great excitement, with wrath on both sides, held in but not subdued; Jacob now let his burst forth. "What is my trespass?" he sharply said; "what is my sin, that thou hast so hotly pursued after me? Whereas thou hast searched all my stuff, what hast thou found of all thy household stuff? Set it here before my brethren, that they may judge betwixt us both. This twenty years have I been with thee; thy ewes and thy she-goats have not cast their young, and the rams of thy flock have I not eaten. That which was torn of beasts, I brought not unto thee; I bore the loss of it; of my hand didst thou require it, whether stolen by day, or stolen by night. Thus

I was; in the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night; and my sleep departed from mine eyes. Thus have I been twenty years in thy house; I served thee fourteen years for thy two daughters, and six years for thy cattle, and thou hast changed my wages ten times. Except the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the Fear of Isaac had been with me, surely thou hadst sent me away now empty. God hath seen mine affliction, and the labor of my hands, and rebuked thee yesternight."

Laban replied, "These daughters are my daughters, and these children are my children, and these cattle are my cattle, and all that thou seest is mine;" but, mortified, foiled, and, though deeply vexed, yet afraid of the supernatural protection and aid which he acknowledged to be about Jacob, he proposed a covenant between the latter and himself. It was made, and a pile of stones thrown up was to be the future boundary beyond which neither was ever aggressively to pass, and also a witness against them should there be any future unrighteous dealing. Laban took care that these latter specifications should be altogether in his own favor; but doubtless Jacob was quite content to escape so well. He offered sacrifice there, and made the company a feast; and on the morrow his father-in-law and party started toward their own home. To Laban, that return journey must have been a very gloomy one,—his goods, his children and grand-children, his profitable son-in-law, flocks, and much of his consequential position at Padan Aram, all stolen away.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE CRITICAL MEETING.

THIS danger safely over, and the hill of stones erected as a boundary beyond which Laban's resentment might not pass, Jacob could now advance more leisurely, as was indeed made necessary by the great fatigues of the recent flight. He was in a very fertile country, abounding in water as well as grass; and if his mind had been easy, he could now have gazed with very great satisfaction upon his flocks and herds and family, and the rich possessions of the man who had, when escaping from home, travelled this road alone, his worldly goods consisting then of only his staff and scrip.

But his mind was not at ease. There was another danger, perhaps much worse than the other, still to be met. Inquiries made during the time in which he was delaying, perhaps for months, in this region, and indeed was advancing reluctantly enough, had made him aware that Esau was now in Edom, and was a powerful man, with retainers enough to do great mischief to the younger brother and his party, if he should be so disposed. To this day a fondness for making *raids* for plunder, or for captives to be carried into slavery, is common among nomads, and we have seen that it was so in the days of Abraham. Esau and his men would now have a ready excuse for such an attack on Jacob and his company.

It was a very anxious time with the latter. What Esau's feelings now were it was impossible for them to say. He had, twenty years before, been rash and impulsive and reckless; time might have softened him, but he had then considered himself as having a grievous wrong to avenge, and feuds among pastoral tribes are proverbially lasting as well as bit-

ter. At Beersheba, if the two brothers should again meet there, every object would be adapted to awaken old resentments. Jacob saw now that it would be better to meet his brother at once and know the worst, inasmuch as here he would be in a condition to fly with at least a part of his household and possessions, if threatened by any very serious danger.

But he chose, first, the very judicious measure of sending messengers to his brother, with a frank statement respecting his residence during these twenty years, and the success attending his labors. He made it manifest that he was not coming home as an unfortunate, needy adventurer, ready to swallow up what was remaining there; but that he had abundant possessions of his own. The message ended with conciliatory language couched in the usual courteous style belonging to the time and place; "I have sent to tell my lord, that I may find grace in thy sight."

Edom was about seventy miles south of the place where Jacob was now staying, which was along the banks of the Jabbok, one of the two large tributaries of the Jordan on the west. At this spot angels appeared to him; how, is not mentioned, but he named the place after them, *Mahanaim*, "hosts."

His messengers went, saw Esau, and returned. The account they brought to Jacob was astounding; Esau was coming to meet him, *attended by four hundred men!*

It seemed evident to every one that only violence could be intended by such a large retinue as this. There was universal alarm. All were looking to Jacob; and he was carrying in his heart the knowledge of a deception practised by him against this brother, by which Esau might feel himself justified in any acts of revenge. The whole company must be resistlessly in the power of the approaching host. Indeed, if there were no other punishment coming, the twenty-four intervening hours of such feelings as he had now while looking at the helpless beings under his care, and who

might all be doomed to sufferings for his sake, were bitter amends for his wrong act. The retribution had come, indeed had been in some measure with him, ever since his deed by his father's bed-side. He had been an exile; the deceiver at Beersheba had been deceived at Haran; the triumph over his brother was turned into humiliation now, which was to be completed in the utter prostration of spirit before that brother.

In deep sorrow and dread he made his dispositions for the coming meeting with Esau and his hosts. He divided his own company and possessions into two parts, and said, "If Esau come to the one company, and smite it, then the other company which is left shall escape." Then he raised his voice to Jehovah in prayer:

"O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, the Lord which saidst unto me, Return unto thy country, and to thy kindred, and I will deal well with thee; I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies, and of all the truth, which thou hast showed unto thy servant; for with my staff I passed over this Jordan, and now I am become two bands. Deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau; for I fear him, lest he will come and smite me, and the mother with the children. And thou saidst, I will surely do thee good, and make thy seed as the sand of the sea, which cannot be numbered for multitude."

On the next morning he prepared a present well adapted to appease Esau; namely,—two hundred and twenty goats, as many sheep, thirty milch-camels and their foals, fifty cattle, twenty she-asses and ten foals; and putting each kind by itself, with an interval between and servants to attend them, he sent them forward to meet his brother. The attendants to each division were to say, in answer to inquiries by Esau, "They be thy servant Jacob's; it is a present sent unto my lord Esau; and behold, also he is be-

hind us." The object was not only seasonably to make a favorable impression on his brother, but to get also a timely indication of what would be the disposition toward his own party. In those countries when a present is accepted the friendship of the receiver is secured; to reject it is a clear sign of enmity and intended hostility.

The following night Jacob sent his remaining company over the Jabbok by one of its fords,[1] and he remained behind for solitary prayer. Evidently the crisis of his life had come. He would not have needed to fear the danger so much, if all this large company with him had not been involved in it also; for his whole history shows him to have been a man of affectionate disposition; and now to the thought that wives and children might suffer, was the added reflection that the occasion was of himself. Borne down in heart and spirit, in his solitude by night he wept[2] as he prayed. An angel came to his side during the prayer, and then in his earnestness to have an assurance of help where only it could be given, he seized on the heavenly messenger and struggled to detain him until such assurance would be given. Prayers and tears seemed not to have availed, for the angel tried to make him relax his hold, and by a touch withered[3] the strength of the struggling man; but the latter held still, as far as he might.

"Let me go," said the angel, "for the day breaketh."

"I will not let thee go except thou bless me."

He prevailed. The deep agony of the prayers and tears and the clinging earnestness shown in the bodily struggle maintained even in pain and weakness, had their reward. The angel said, "Thy name shall be called no more Jacob,

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[1] It is evident from what follows that he sent them to the northern side of the river, while he remained on the south bank in the direction of Esau. The river is represented by the traveller Buckingham as ten yards wide, and deep and rapid.

[2] Compare Hosea xii. 4.

[3] See Gen. xxxii. 25.

but *Israel;*[1] for as a prince hast thou power with God, and with men, and *hast prevailed.*" The angel then blessed him. The humiliations and the fearful agony seem to have been an expiation for the sin of the *supplanter*, and another name was given him. But, for the sake of distinction, the name Jacob is still continued to him in the Scriptures, while Israel is the term applied to his descendants.

In the morning, as the sun was rising, he crossed the stream back to his companions. He was lame, still halting from the shrinking of a sinew[2] touched by the angel in his struggle, but his heart shared fully the brightness of the morning. Such struggle as had been his through the night is often still the experience of mortals in doubts and agonies, from which they come forth with hearts purified and strengthened and a feeling that God's blessing has been secured.

He now divided his household into three companies, putting the "handmaids and their children foremost, and Leah and her children after, and Rachel and Joseph hindermost." He himself preceded them. Esau was understood to be near at hand. As soon as he came into view, and while he was approaching, Jacob "bowed himself to the ground seven times until he came near to his brother, and Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck, and kissed him; and they wept."

The three companies of his household were now successively brought up, and made to Esau the usual Eastern salutations. He inquired the meaning of the droves which he had met, and was informed that they were intended as a gift, which, on its being pressed upon him, he accepted, and then proposed that they should journey onward together. Jacob, however, urged that the children and his flocks were tender

[1] From שרה *Sarah*, to *contend*, to *struggle*, and אל *El*, *God*.

[2] The Scriptures say that "the children of Israel eat not of the sinew which shrank, which is upon the hollow of the thigh, unto this day;" a custom which, the author is informed, they continue to our time.

and must need rest and a slower kind of advance; and then, on his brother's offering to leave some of his men in company, he excused himself also from that. "What needeth it?" he said. "Let me find grace in the sight of my Lord." So Esau and his party left him and returned to Edom.

It was clearly a great relief to Jacob and his party to have them depart.

CHAPTER XVIII.

JACOB IN CANAAN.

JACOB was now about ninety-seven years of age, his youngest son, Joseph, six; and his father, Isaac, still living, had advanced to the great age of one hundred and fifty-seven years.

The Israelite company, after Esau's departure, moved onward along the banks of the Jabbok, and found attractions sufficient in one of these spots to induce them to erect booths, or temporary houses, whence the place took its name of Succoth. Advancing thence onward, where now that stream took a more southerly course they left it, and crossing the Jordan, made their encampment on the large plain of Shechem, where Abraham, on his way from the Euphrates, had pitched his tent. Here is a well still going by Jacob's name, and which tradition says was dug by him, which is probably correct; for he must have remained here seven or eight years, as we infer from the ages requisite for his children in the events detailed in Gen. xxxiv. This well, which is assigned to him by all travellers, even the most skeptical respecting localities, is seventy-five feet deep, and about nine in diameter; and is nearly opposite the rich valley of Shechem, here commencing between the

mounts Gerizim and Ebal, and stretching in great beauty and fertility toward the west. He purchased here "a parcel of a field, where he had spread his tent, at the hand of Hamor, Shechem's father, for an hundred pieces of money. and he erected an altar, and called it *El-Elohe-Israel*, 'the God of Israel.'"

The young prince, Shechem, became enamored of Jacob's daughter,—his youngest child,—and his father offered that, if she might be given in marriage, the land should be before them for any occupancy which they might desire. "Dwell ye and trade ye therein," he said, "and get ye possessions therein." It was a liberal offer, for the valley of Shechem has always been considered the garden spot of Palestine.

The son also offered any dowry that they might require. But he had already committed a great crime in the case of the young girl, which Jacob's two oldest sons,—whose full sister she was,—felt could only be expiated by blood; and they formed a treacherous plot which, successfully carried out, through the strong love of the young men, enabled them to sate their revenge. They slew Hamor and Shechem and the other men of the city, and plundered the houses, carrying off the women and children, and all possessions in the city and fields as booty. Jacob, when made conscious of this, trembled for the result; for it might lead to a league in all the country against such an apparently bloodthirsty race. The sister of the young men was restored from Shechem's house, to which she had been taken; but she was brought back covered with shame; and all felt themselves disgraced. To Jacob's reproaches on the two sons, they replied boldly and strongly, trying to justify themselves.

Great troubles had thus came into Jacob's own household, and he had reason to search in deep humiliation, and see whether there was not infidelity to God among them all, as well as a spirit of cruelty growing up among his sons. There was need not only for such scrutiny, but probably

also for self-condemnation as regarded himself; for his favorite wife had concealed the teraphim belonging to her father, stolen from home; and if he had not approved her act, still he seems finally to have suffered the images to remain. There were, at all events, false gods in the camp. The spirit of idolatry in those countries was penetrating and pervading, and kept its hold even in such a family as this.

He was now directed by the divine authority to proceed southwardly to Bethel; and at the thought of this place there came before him very vividly, not only his beautiful night dream of the angels ascending and descending, and of God above them giving his words of comfort, but also the promise he had made there, that if God would keep and bless him, then the Lord should be his God. Had he been faithful to this promise, as God had been faithful and true to him? He determined that his company should go to this sacred place at Bethel with pure hands; he therefore said, "Put away the strange gods that are among you, and be clean and change your garments; and let us arise and go up to Bethel; and I will make there an altar unto God who answered me in the day of my distress, and was with me in the way which I went." They brought him their gods and also their ear ornaments, and he hid them under an oak in the plain; and then the company began their movement toward Bethel, which was distant twenty-five miles. When they arrived there, he erected an altar; and here God appeared to him once more, and reassured him with promises of blessings and of large increase and glory among his posterity. A stone pillar was erected in commemoration of this event, and oil and a drink-offering poured upon it in order to make it sacred.

During his residence at Shechem he had visited his father, as we may infer from the fact that Deborah, his mother's nurse, was with him now at Bethel. His mother herself appears not to have been living; and this aged nurse

was a precious link between him and the parent who had been to him so tender and so devoted as even to be willing to take the father's curse for his sake. At Bethel he was called upon to mourn the loss of Deborah, who died there, and who was buried with such marks of grief that the tree under which she was interred received the name of *Allon-bachuth*, "the oak of weeping."

Deaths in the domestic circle are thought seldom to come alone, and Jacob was soon after this overwhelmed with a terrible calamity,—the loss of Rachel, the most dearly beloved in all his family group. He had left Bethel, and was moving his encampment southwardly, when a short time before coming to Ephrath (afterward Bethlehem), this wife became the mother of another son; but in giving him birth, yielded up her own life. She had strength to name him *Ben-oni*, "the son of my sorrow;" but his father afterward called him *Benjamin*, "the son of my right hand." He erected a pillar there, which centuries afterward was yet remaining as a memorial of the place of her interment:[1] a small edifice of solid masonry with a dome, now standing on the right of the road from Jerusalem to Bethlehem, about two miles from the latter place, is considered by all travellers as still marking this spot.

Isaac was, at this time, living in the neighborhood of Hebron. He was now about one hundred and sixty-six years old, infirm, and probably altogether blind. Jacob and his large retinue made their final settlement there, and his numerous flocks and herds found abundant pasturage in this fertile region. Fourteen years after this the father died, "and was gathered unto his people, being old and full of days." Esau came over from Edom, and the two brothers deposited his remains in the cave of Machpelah. The older one had once determined on this event as that which was to

[1] Gen. xxxv. 20.

let forth his revengeful fury upon Jacob; but his feelings had changed, and the younger brother, in his own great abundance was able now to let him have the patrimony long years before so recklessly sold for a mess of pottage. Esau made a final removal of all his possessions to Edom; for the riches of the two "were more than that they might dwell together; and the land wherein they were strangers could not bear them, because of their cattle."

Our attention is now altogether concentrated on Jacob, and we turn to look at him and his household here at Hebron.

The sight is not a very pleasant one. He himself was still the same gentle, affectionate man as always; and now more truthful and honest; for his severe trials had toned down his character in this latter respect. We begin to have for him the reverential regard to which his age entitles him; for he was now one hundred and seven years old. His pastoral wealth had become ample; there was abundance in his fields and in stores at home; but his family matters were very far from being satisfactory. His ten oldest sons had now mostly arrived at man's estate, and had grown up with such perversities of disposition as must be the consequence where there are so many mothers with jealousies and bickerings, which no ruler of such a family can suppress. The young men were all getting to be violent and lawless. We have had occasion to record their murderous violence at Shechem; and subsequently the oldest of them, Reuben, was guilty of a sin similar to the one which had there whetted their revenge, but far worse in degree.

But in this tent at home, there was to Jacob one very bright spot, although even this was the cause of anxieties, in consequence of the jealousies in the household. Joseph, his elder son by the favorite wife, seems to have partaken of her remarkable beauty.[1] He was his father's favorite, and

[1] Compare Gen. xxxix. 6, with xxix. 17.

was sprightly and happy in the boyish enjoyment of that favoritism; and in it, he may unconsciously or consciously have made his lively repartees sometimes stinging to his envious brothers. Their envy became darkened into hatred, when they found, as they did presently, that he was reporting their cases of bad conduct to his father. Bright, pleasant, joyous lad that he was, he could not dive into the depths of rancor beginning to be formed in their hearts toward him, and which he increased very much, one day, by mentioning a dream which he had just had; which was that they and he were in the field binding sheaves of grain, and that his sheaf rose and stood up, and all the others bowed before it, as in obeisance.

"Shalt thou indeed reign over us? or shalt thou indeed have dominion over us?" they cried, in scornful indignation; and deeper venom was added to their hatred of the young aspirant. But worse was yet to come; for he had another dream, even still more strangely significant, as it might be interpreted; and he told it to them in the presence of the father. "Behold," he said, "I have dreamed a dream more; and behold, the sun and the moon and the eleven stars made obeisance to me." There came a rebuke from the father, but it was not very severe: "What is this dream that thou hast dreamed? Shall I and thy mother and thy brethren indeed come to bow down ourselves to thee to the earth?" Probably, indeed, the father's tones were contradictory to his words, and showed increased satisfaction with his somewhat pert and spoiled favorite; but in the mean time, under the comparatively calm faces around, were hearts stung, and boiling with rage. Jacob was already beginning to look through this dream to some great future for this boy. He remembered well the divine promises to his forefathers and to himself. His other sons were bad young men, and he was glad to see in this one,—the gift of his late beautiful, beloved Rachel,—the promise of qualities

that might make him a suitable recipient for the wonderful blessings to come from God. In his gladness and joyousness of favor, he did a very unwise thing; for he gave to Joseph a coat of many brilliant colors, which became to the others a perpetual, stinging reminder of the father's partiality.

They hated the lad with increasing bitterness of hatred; and they were glad when, after a while, they received directions from Jacob to take part of the flocks back to the place which he had purchased by the well at Shechem, and to pasture them there.

There was some danger in sending them to a region where they had once committed such excesses; but time had somewhat moderated the resentments in the neighborhood, and probably the young men thought themselves able to withstand such feelings in a country where they had made so terrible an impression of their power. Indeed, when they had been formerly leaving the place, a terror of them connected with the superhuman was, we are informed, upon the cities in that region so great as to check any disposition toward pursuit.[1]

The ten sons went off to Shechem with a portion of the flocks; and then, in a short time the father's heart began to be anxious concerning them, and he concluded to send Joseph to make inquiries and to bring him back word of their condition. We may wonder that he was willing to trust the lad in such company; but probably, with the cunning which deep-seated, revengeful feeling is apt to produce, they had concealed their hatred of this son; for in all the subsequent events Jacob appears never to have had a suspicion of any possibility of foul dealing on their part.

Joseph was then seventeen years of age, active, lithe, bright and joyous, and in his gay dress "of many colors,"

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[1] Gen. xxxv. 5.

was a sight to make the father's heart proud, as he presented himself ready for the journey and asked for directions and the parting blessing. *How long it would be before the two would meet again! and how different the circumstances of the meeting!*

Shechem was fifty-six miles northward from Hebron. The lad reached the place in safety, but his brothers and the flocks were not there. He was wandering about searching for them, when he was informed by a stranger that they were probably at Dothan, which was about fifteen miles further northwardly, and to it he directed his steps. The brothers were there, and they recognized him at a distance, for his gay dress made him easily known;—that dress, flaunting even here before them, a token of the father's partiality and reminder of scenes at home!

"Behold, the dreamer cometh," they cried as they saw him; and the eyes of the young men meeting quickly as they turned toward each other, had in them an understood, deadly intent. It is said that the lion, when he has once tasted human blood, becomes by preference a man-eater; and these men,—some of them at least—had before this, made their hearts callous in scenes of carnage. The seeds of deadly feeling toward this young man had previously been sown in their hearts; he had already been informer against them; they looked upon him now as a spy come among them. It had previously needed but little to inflame them into a fatal purpose; the purpose was rapidly and almost simultaneously formed now; he was there alone with them; how easy it would be to kill him and carry report to their father that he had been destroyed by a wild beast. That was their quickly-formed determination, but Reuben interfered. He had a plan for cheating the others and rescuing Joseph, and then delivering him to his father, perhaps as an expiation for a terrible outrage on the feelings

of the latter in the case of Bilhah,[1] the concubine of Jacob. He therefore persuaded them, instead of killing their brother at once, to cast him into a pit, to leave him there to perish, as this would not be so obviously imbruing their hands in his blood. There was no water in the pit, and his own intentions were to come secretly afterward and rescue the lad.

Joseph came on in the brightness and joyousness of unsuspecting youth, glad to have the uncertainty of search over by finding them at last, and glad in the meeting. He was startled by the fierceness of looks bent upon him; he was seized; his coat was quickly torn off him with violence; there were few words from them, but these were deadly; he saw their purpose; he raised an anguished cry; he entreated;[2] but he was helpless in the hands of infuriated men, deaf to all cries and lashing their hearts up into fresh rage and bloodier sentiments of revenge. They dragged him to the pit and cast him in; and then going off a sufficient distance, they sat down with such relish as they could have, to their customary meal.

Reuben was absenting himself from them now. Fearful probably that his manner, if he were to remain among them, might betray his purposes, he had gone off to quite a distant part of the grazing region, and was waiting there until the time for delivering his brother should come.

But deliverance came in a manner unexpected by him. While the nine brothers were at their meal, they saw approaching them a company of Ishmaelites, those restless wanderers over the country, sometimes nomads, sometimes traders, sometimes robbers, anything, indeed, that would accommodate itself to their fondness for a roving life. These men had spices from the region of Gilead,[3] just eastward from this across the Jordan, and were bound for a

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[1] Gen. xxxv. 5.

[2] See Gen. xlii. 21.

[3] Gilead was famous for its balsams. See Jer. viii. 22; xlvi. 11.

market for their balsams in Egypt. As they were seen approaching, Judah suggested to his brethren that it would be better to make money by selling the brother, instead of letting him die in the pit; and in addition to the prospect of gain, some relentings appear to have seized on him; "for he is our brother," said Judah, "and our own flesh." The project was agreed to, and Joseph was drawn up and sold to the traders for twenty pieces of silver; and he was soon moving with them in a direction that must carry him far from his home.

Reuben, toward evening, returned to the pit; he found it empty! He rent his clothes in his extremity of distress. "The child is not," he cried; "and whither shall I go?"

There was still a terrible scene to be gone through by these guilty young men, and their hearts shrank from it with many misgivings. In the depths of their depravity they still had a reverence for their father, and they all could dread his curse. But a common interest now bound them to maintaining the lie which they had agreed upon, and they believed that they could trust each other in the bond of a common guilt. They killed a kid, and having dipped the gay garment of their brother in its blood, carried it to the tent at Hebron. Their words, on presenting themselves before their father, were few and cold and seem heartless; perhaps they dared not trust their guilty feelings to a longer address.

"This we have found," they said; "know now whether it be thy son's coat or no."

A start of horror; a look of recognition on the garment; a pang of agony at the sight of blood;—and the seeming truth was all revealed!

For many days he sat, all encased in his horror; days and nights were equal to him in their frightful gloom. "It is my son's coat; an evil beast hath devoured him; Joseph is without doubt rent in pieces," he kept saying;—his own

garments rent now, and sackcloth upon him; all his children around trying to comfort him, but in vain.

"I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning," he muttered, in reply to all their attempts to console him; "I will go down into the grave unto my son mourning." Even the little child, given by his Rachel at the cost of her life, failed to bring him relief in his sorrow; its gentle, sprightly ways jarred harshly on him; he wanted no relief. His sons, with that guilty secret in them, stood around, silent, or essaying words of sympathy. Words and silence were alike to him.

CHAPTER XIX.

EGYPT.

IN the mean while, the lad was on his way toward Egypt in company with his owners, and had his own griefs without any friends near him and without sympathy. Young people sometimes grow old in a few hours; and his recent experiences had been of a character to teach him a vast deal in a single point of time. Those flashing eyes, the concentrated wrath and inhumanity in those faces of his brothers, their stinging words in answer to his supplications, their cold, pitiless observance of his tears, their fury and determination, and then the conviction in his mind that all was hopeless, and that he, the helpless boy, was to be brutally murdered by those who should have been his best protectors,—all this had been burnt into his soul, and left there its mark of hissing fire. It is not to be wondered, if this searing process reached also in some degree his affections for his father; for the perception of the father's indiscretion

in his partiality, carried so far as to send him off in this gay robe, rose now clearly before him, and he felt that a wrong had been done him even by this doting parent. To pet a child is always the surest way to make him selfish, exacting and inconsiderate of others; and this process had for years been going on in Joseph's heart. But a cruel blow had come. He awoke from its first stunning effects to find himself a slave, alone, without sympathy from others; but he was also a far wiser young man as regarded all the world and especially himself.

Their route lay transversely across the hill country, south and west of Dothan, and then to the great plain bordered by the Mediterranean; and thence on it, toward the south. As they travelled along, they had, at the end of a few days, on their left, the loftier table-land, amid which were embosomed the tents and the households where Joseph's father and the little Benjamin were living; and where, he thought, his brutal, older brothers might be now with their false tales. Feelings of affection for the loving parent filled the boy's eyes and made them overflow; and yet with them was mingled some sentiment of condemnation toward the indiscreet cause of all these sufferings. Perhaps, in his new distrust of all men, he queried whether the absent boy would not soon be forgotten by all at home? At all events, that home was to him now a shut-off world.

The lad soon began to look bravely to the future, and to prepare himself for the new world of which he was to be a part. He had the hopefulness always belonging to youth; he was good-looking, and had a bright, quick intellect; he was in a situation to impress discretion, and had just been through a lesson in which the want of it had been terribly shown. He determined to be cautious, prudent, watchful, and hopeful; what was best of all, he resolved to adhere to the God of his forefathers, respecting whom, his notions, it is true, were dark; but yet were sufficient to satisfy him that

this Divine Being was a powerful helper to those who trusted him. He resolved to be faithful to God; then, he believed, he would have the Protector and Friend of whom he was now going to stand so much in need.

So they travelled on over that dreary stretch of country between Canaan and Egypt; and then they came, first to a few patches of grass, next to larger stretches of verdure; and finally, they had before them the seemingly interminable green of the Delta, all one lovely plain of grass, till in the immeasurable distance sky and earth seemed to meet.

We shall see probably in a future part of this book that in the hundred and ninety-three years since Abraham's visit to this country, the Hyksos had been expelled, and that the old Egyptian dynasties, once more restored, had now been about eighty-one years in the rulership of this country. The shepherd-kings, during the five hundred and eleven years of their possession of it, had seemingly, toward the last, slid gradually into many of the usages of the more refined, conquered people; so that, when the change of dynasties came, we may suppose that there was no great transition, except in the governing power. Joseph appears to have been brought into the country at the beginning of the reign of Tuthmosis III. (Tetmes, Ra-men-Kheper), the fifth sovereign of the new dynasties, an active and powerful king, whose great edifices are abundant even as far up as the second cataract of the Nile.

The sovereigns were all called Pharaoh, from the god Phrah, signifying "the sun," and were to their subjects the representative of the deity. They were considered the emblems of the god of light; their royal authority was believed to be directly from the gods, and these were supposed to communicate through them their choicest blessings to men. The king was the head of the religion of the state, was the judge and lawgiver, and commanded the army and led it to

war. It was his right to preside over the sacrifices and pour out libations to the gods, and whenever he was present, he had the privilege of being the officiating high priest. He was himself always of the military or the priestly class, and the princes also belonged to one of these classes.[1]

The course of our record brings us again among these remarkable people, and we shall have frequent occasion to notice their peculiar habits; but, for the present, we simply accompany the young Joseph as he goes along, gazing, wondering, himself and his company gazed at, and the subjects, as he soon perceived, of no very complimentary remark by the inhabitants. The reason of this last he discovered subsequently, when he came to know that every person in Egypt was shaved,—the head as well as face; and that so particular were the Egyptians on this point that to have neglected it was a subject of reproach and ridicule; and that whenever they intended to convey the idea of a man of low condition, or a slovenly person, their artists represented him with a beard. If foreigners who were brought to Egypt as slaves had beards on their arrival, as soon as they were put to service among these people they were compelled to conform to the cleanly habits of their masters; their beards and heads were shaved, and they adopted the close cap. The hair of the beards and heads of Egyptians was allowed to grow only in mourning, or in times of great misfortune, as a sign of distress.[2]

So the Hebrew lad, while staring at the close-shaven people along the way, with their bare heads quite exposed or covered with a close-fitting cap, was in return stared and sneered at; and again he saw that, strangely enough, while they shaved the beard, they wore false beards made of plaited hair, those of private individuals restricted exactly to two inches in length. That of the king, we know

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[1] See Wilkinson's "Ancient Egyptians." [2] Ibid.

was long and square: for the sculptured or painted gods it was turned up at the end; after death, any one worthy of it might be represented with the turned-up beard, signifying that he had been absorbed into their deity.

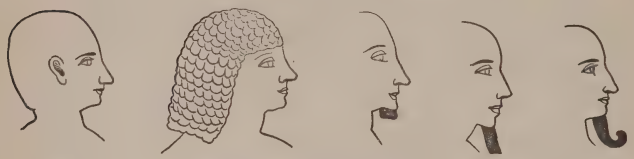
Part of the Nile and its branches.

1, Memphis. 2, The Pyramids. 3, Present City of Cairo. 4, The most sacred City of On, or Hara, the Heliopolis of the Greeks. 5, Pithom, and Raamses, the two Treasure-cities built by Ramesses II. His canal between them. 7, 7, Chief road to and from Canaan.

There is not space here to notice the many strange sights constantly occurring and thickening along the way, as Joseph went on; and we only accompany him along, near the wonderful pyramids and into the immense city of Memphis, whose suburbs began in the shadow of the pyramids, although the heart of it was not reached till eight miles further on. Arrived there, he was purchased by Potiphar, captain of the king's guard, and was taken to the palace of his new master, and his own head shaved. He wore also the dress of the Egyptians; there was a complete metamorphosis in his exterior; but he was a youth of fine personal appearance, and in any costume would compare advantageously with his Egyptian companions. It is not to be in-

ferred that the heads were always left in this extreme simplicity of bareness, or of the close-fitting cap; for wigs were in common use amongst both men and women, and were often most elaborately and carefully made. The following are from Wilkinson's copies of Egyptian paintings, representing heads and head ornaments of Egyptians.

Egyptian heads in the time of Joseph.
(*From Wilkinson's Ancient Egyptians.*)



Bare. | With a wig. | False beard of a private individual. | False beard of a king. | Beard sculptured on their gods.

A head with a close cap is seen on p. 79.

Joseph remained about ten years in Potiphar's house. The name of his master, as we have it on the monuments, *Pet-Pa-Ra*, or *Pet-Ph-Ra*,[1] "belonging to the sun," shows us that the young Hebrew was here brought into close contact with the imposing religious systems of that country, well adapted to mystify and to enchant, to work upon the imagination and the outward senses, and, being in connection with what was evidently his worldly interest, also to ensnare his heart.

The religion of the Egyptians, although entirely idolatrous, was of a much more refined, and, if we may use the word, spiritualized character than that which we have been looking at in Ur of the Chaldees. Both had their origin undoubtedly in the primitive true idea of God; but while that of the Chaldees soon took the form of worshipping him in what they considered his representatives, the sun and

[1] We have the name again with slight difference of orthography in the priest of the sun, afterward Joseph's father-in-law, *Pati-Ph-Ra.*

moon, and so finally into utter grossness and sensuality, this of the Egyptians began with deifying the *qualities* of God, as in AMUN, *the Divine Mind in operation;* NEFF, *the Spirit of God;* PTHAH, *the creative power,* &c. This was the beginning; but it must be seen that a system which encouraged and took pleasure in multiplying emblems as gods, would soon not only have an abundance of such objects of worship, but would become obscure by its own vastness of amplifications and its complications. "As the subtlety of philosophical speculation entered into the originally simple theory, numerous subdivisions of the divine nature were made; and at length anything which appeared to partake of or bear analogy to it, was admitted to a share of the worship. Hence arose the various grades of deities, and they were known as gods of the first, second and third orders."[1] It was a polytheism in a pantheism; but their religious system soon became so large and involved, and full of subtleties, that its secrets were known only to the priests, who took care to keep the knowledge of them confined to themselves. These, with the numerous religious observances, gave this order of men "that influence which they so long possessed; but they had obtained a power which, while it raised their own class, could not fail to degrade the rest of the people; who, allowed to substitute superstition for religion and credulity for belief, were taught to worship the figures of imaginary beings, while they were excluded from a real knowlege of the Deity, and those truths which constituted the wisdom of the Egyptians."[2]

One of the greatest of their gods, Osiris, one of whose titles was, "The manifester of good and truth," had probably his origin in the deification of the quality of goodness in the Deity; but to this idea of Osiris were so many adjuncts and myths as to make him one of the greatest mys-

[1] Wilkinson. [2] Ibid.

teries of their religion. He was considered the judge of the dead; and in this manner the belief of existence after death, which was universal in Egypt, was so closely connected with this god and with a vast number of impressive ceremonies, that when the great Jewish lawgiver came, two centuries after Joseph's time, to legislate for his own people, he could not touch on the subject of a future life without a continual steeping of their minds in remembrances of this god and probably also of reverence for him. Osiris was also said to have taught the Egyptians agriculture, and was therefore beloved as their greatest benefactor. His spirit was considered to reside in the bull Apis, because the ox was employed in tillage, and this bull, the outward representative of the god, was an object of reverence while living and was embalmed when dead.[1] The calf Mnevis at On, the most sacred city in Egypt, "was also dedicated to Osiris and honored by the Egyptians with a reverence next to that paid to Apis, whose sire some pretend him to be." We shall see hereafter how the Israelites, when, even at the foot of Sinai they turned to idolatry, adopted for their worship an image of the calf Mnevis, the representation of Osiris, judge of the dead. We cannot, indeed, wonder that after such an exhibition, Moses dared not give new enticements to this worship by strengthening his new laws with the powerful motives that might have been deduced from the future existence of the soul. No part of the religious doctrines and observances in Egypt was drawn out with such particularity or invested with such reverential solemnity as those for the deceased. "The Book of the Dead," a papyrus manuscript, discovered by the French expedition in

[1] The Historical Society of New York is rich in the ownership of three of these sacred bulls embalmed and wrapped as mummies, part of the extremely valuable Egyptian collection purchased from H. Abbott, a successful amateur collector. It is said that but one other mummy of this kind—now in the British Museum—has yet been discovered.

the tombs of the kings of Thebes, contains prayers, invocations and confessions, to which the soul in its long journey through the celestial gates is giving utterance. Osiris, thus originally, it would seem, a deification of the quality of goodness in God; then a god himself as the manifester of good and truth; then additionally made the judge of the dead; and having his living spirit dwelling in Apis; was apparently the most popular and honored of their numerous gods, as is indicated by the multiplication of his figure on all their structures.

Miss Martineau, in her interesting account of a visit to that country, says of such sculptured representations: "I was never tired of gazing at these Osirides everywhere, and trying to imprint indelibly on my memory the characteristics of the old Egyptian face. . . . Innocence is the prevailing expression, and sternness is not. Thus the stiffest figures and most monotonous gestures convey still only an impression of dispassionateness and benevolence. The dignity of the gods and goddesses is beyond all description from this union of fixity and benevolence. . . . The Greek and Roman gods appear like wayward children beside them. Herodotus says that the Greek gods were children to these in respect of age (2, 4, 50, 58, 140), and truly they appear so in respect of wisdom and maturity. Their limitation of powers and consequent struggles, rivalries and transgressions, their fondness and vindictiveness, their anger, fear and hope, are all attributes of childhood, contrasted strikingly with the majestic, passive possession of power and the dispassionate and benignant frame of these ever-young, old deities of Egypt. Vigilant, serene, benign, they sit, teaching us to inquire reverently into the early powers and conditions of that Human Mind which was capable of such conceptions."[1]

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[1] "Eastern Life."

CHAPTER XX.

BEFORE THE KING.

IF this Egyptian system of belief, made additionally impressive by its very grand architectural adjuncts, has in our own times an attractiveness sufficient to awaken great enthusiasm among scholars, who, however, soon lose their way among the fogs of its mysticisms, what must it have been as Joseph saw it, in the royal palaces with the king at its head and all his power employed in its support! Nothing can be better adapted than it, even in its simplest forms, to impress the imagination and to beguile the judgment; but Joseph's imagination had been terribly sobered, and his judgment suddenly and strangely matured as nothing but such shocks as he had received can sober and mature; and he looked now with extremest caution and with penetrative acumen beyond his years on everything that he saw. He was helpless, dependent, a slave, and alone with that frightful aloneness when the heart is severed from everything on earth. No doubt that dream of his father, when at Bethel he had seen the ladder and the angels on it, and God above; and the vow of this father to God; and the manner in which the Deity had in return blest and kept his parent, had been all told in the tent to this son; and now came back to him. If Joseph could have those bright angels about him and that God for his God, he need not fear and would never be truly helpless and alone. Such a religion was surely a far more blessed one, and more blessing, than these over-refined Egyptian forms, and ceremonies, and belief. So the young man felt, and he cleaved to God.

God, in return, signally blessed him. He found himself, after a while, rising in the estimation of his master, who

perceived the fidelity of the young Hebrew, his care and industry and quick intelligence; and noticed also how, as the trusts committed to him were enlarged, a larger prosperity to himself was flowing in on every side. In consequence, promotion from lower to higher grades of position and responsibility came, one after another, until in the course of time the Hebrew slave was made "overseer of the house," with the full and absolute control over all the captain's possessions. "He left all that he had in Joseph's hand; and he knew not aught he had, save the bread which he did eat." The position was one not only of great responsibility, but of vast labor; for the monuments, and the paintings in their tombs, prove that in no other country have the minutiæ of life been more rigorously conducted or more subject to careful rule. Scribes are shown taking full inventories of possessions and losses or gains; cattle, agricultural products, birds, fishes, all come under the notice of such records; and the whole system of private life was regulated according to fixed customs or prescribed by laws. Potiphar was a person evidently high in authority and of large possessions. By degrees, as time passed on, Joseph, as the captain's admiration of him had increased, had got to be the most powerful man in the household.

But other eyes—those of the captain's wife—had also been fixed on him in admiration, which finally grew into a guilty passion for the handsome young man. She made advances to him, which he repelled. He represented to her his master's trust in him and his fidelity. "How then can I do this great wickedness," he said, "and sin against God." She insisted still; and one day when he had gone into the house in his ordinary duties and they two were alone, she became so bold that he could escape only by flying from her presence. But she had seized on his flowing robe, and he had left it behind; and now, her former passion changing into fury, she made use of the garment in support of false

charges against him of attempted infidelity to his master. A scene of fierce rage on the part of the captain and of indignation throughout the household followed. The revengeful woman triumphed; the young man was hurried off to prison, and there he was loaded with irons and his feet put in the stocks.[1]

Such was the reward of his fidelity. What now could he hope for from the future? The hopes which even in his journey across the sands to Egypt had cheered him as a certain reward of his purposed activity and faithfulness in his new, servile condition; his long efforts in his master's service; the acknowledged prosperity that had ensued to that master's house; his fidelity to his master's honor; his fidelity to God;—all this, and here, now, the end! Hope even was gone; what could he hope for? The passionate, revengeful woman, unprincipled as she had shown herself to be, had in her possession apparent evidence of his guilt; the punishment in that country for guilt such as he was charged with, was severe; his master's fury, seemingly so just, must pursue him in every new effort; his own late exaltation in the palace had made him many enemies, as such exaltations always do, especially when the favored person is a foreigner; and sharp tongues were everywhere now unloosed against him. Where was any hope left?

Such feelings would force themselves on him in that dark cell through the day, and in the dreams at night, and through the following days, till thought became his worst persecutor, and an untiring one. He longed at times for forgetfulness of all things, except God. For God was truly coming to him now, as he always does to us in our humiliations, making his presence felt by the improved heart. As we lose our self-confidence, he draws us in closer confidence to himself. He never deserts those who, even in much weak-

[1] See Ps. cv. 18.

ness of heart and in great darkness, are feeling around for him. He comes in our need. The afflictions he sends are remedies to the diseases of our souls, and Joseph probably needed such a remedy; for the great exaltations were well adapted to make him proud and self-confident, and consequently forgetful of God. He was now brought low; and here, in this seemingly desperate condition, this school of severest trial, God was preparing for him, so purified, far greater blessing than he had yet received. Days passed by, and time lengthened on; the peculiar humble quiet and gentleness of the young man were after a while noticed by the keeper of the prison, and they won their way by degrees even in the heart of this man, who had so often to deal with crime and to steel himself against all humanity. He watched this prisoner attentively; and impressions of his innocence, and then of his entire truthfulness, at first very faint and probably repelled, began to take strength, and at last settled more and more into convictions. He trusted him slightly at first, and with keen observation of the results; and then more and more fully; and at last with entire confidence, both as respected the guardianship of the other prisoners and the general matters of the prison. Hope had become bright again in the prisoner's heart. His heart, purified by suffering and divested of over-confidence in himself and in earthly help, and more entirely confident in God, felt that this new hope was more vivifying and blessing, because it was what may be called a humble hope.

These previous events of his gradual rise in Potiphar's house, and continued stewardship there, and the wide prosperity to his master in consequence, and afterward of the imprisonment, and the new slowly increasing confidence in him at the prison, and the trust confided, all required more time than perhaps is perceived in the brief narrative of this book; for Joseph had now been eleven years in Egypt, and

had got to be twenty-eight years of age. At this period occurred an event which formed the turning-point in his life.

The chief butler and chief baker[1] of the king had given him such offence, that by his order they were cast into prison; and, as it turned out, they came under Joseph's especial charge. They had not been long in confinement, when, one morning, noticing a peculiar sadness in both, he inquired its cause; and each narrated a dream which had come to him during the previous night, and which seemed to have a peculiar, perhaps portentous, meaning. That to the chief baker was portentous indeed, as explained to him by Joseph at his request; for it signified that, in three days, he should be hanged by the royal order; the chief butler's, on the other hand, was interpreted to signify that at the end of the same period he should be restored to his former office. Both results occurred on the third day, as had been predicted. Joseph had charged the butler, as a requital for relieving his mind by this cheerful prediction, to bring his case before the sovereign on his restoration, and so effect his own release. But the chief butler, as is often done by men when in prosperity, neglected the friend of his adverse days, and Joseph's request was unheeded, and, indeed, forgot.

But, two years after this, Pharaoh himself had, in one night, two dreams apparently so similar in their meaning as to be significant of some very important event about to come to pass. In the first of these, seven "well-favored kine and fat-fleshed" rose from the river and fed on its banks. Immediately afterward also came up seven others, but poor and lean, which presently fell on the first and devoured them. He awaked; but sleeping again he saw seven ears of corn, "rank and good," come on a single stalk;[2] immedi-

[1] Diodorus Siculus informs us that all the officers of the Egyptian kings were from the most illustrious families of the priesthood; no common person being ever permitted to serve in the presence of the monarch.

[2] Wheat now raised in Egypt has this peculiarity.

ately after them, seven ears, "thin and blasted with the east wind," came out also, and these devoured the former.

Now the king, as the reader will remember, was considered as a representative of the Deity; was named after Phrah, the god of the sun or light, and was supposed to receive especial enlightenment; and, as Diodorus informs us, dreams were regarded in that country with religious reverence. In this case there were two dreams having such resemblance as seemed to give them particular significance, while the connection of one of them with the river, if they meant anything at all, evidently associated that stream with its meaning. Every one knows that the very existence of the Egyptians depends upon the Nile; and that, if their river fails to attain the needed height in its annual flood, a famine ensues; and therefore how keenly and anxiously the rising of the water inch by inch must be watched and heralded over the country. Pharaoh's dreams were consequently adapted to create a strong curiosity if not nervous anxiety; and in the morning he had his "wise men" and magicians summoned before him; and having informed them of the occurrences in the night, demanded an explanation. They dared not venture upon any. It would have been easy to give a fanciful exposition; but the monarch was evidently in a nervous earnestness, and their vague guesses might very readily cost them their lives. They hesitated, could not agree, doubted, and drew back in fear. Their eyes fell before the scowling, angry glances of the absolute king. The whole subject was now every moment taking additional importance in the agitated household in consequence of the general dilemma; for, on the refusal of the wise men and magicians, the pertinacity and earnestness of the monarch increased; and with these the dream was increasing in its importance in his eyes.

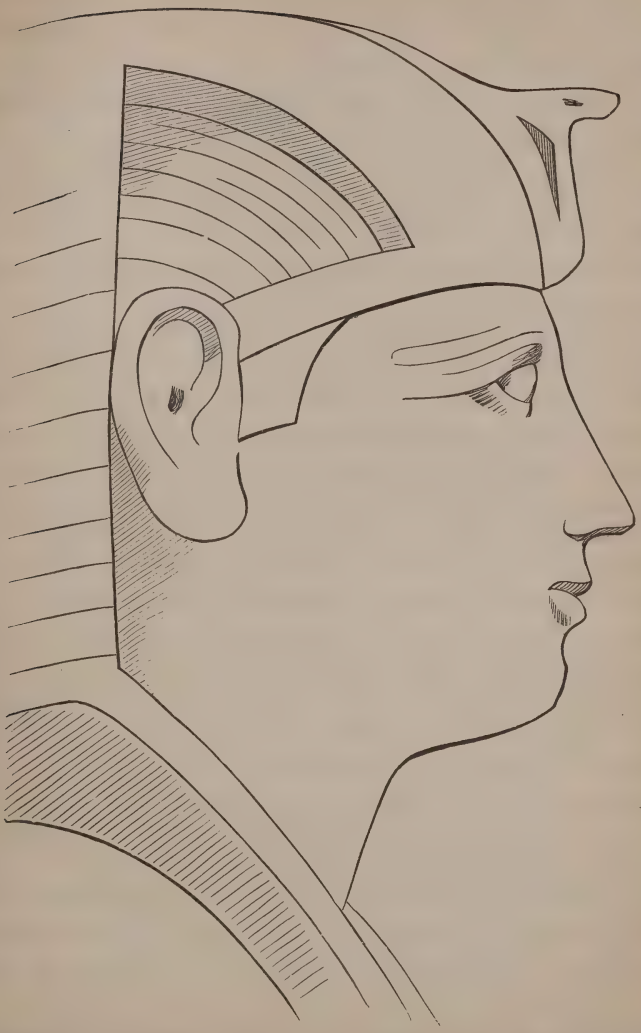
His chief butler came forward now, greatly to the relief of all. The occurrences in his prison life had just

flashed on his mind, with a pang too, perhaps, at his forgetfulness of his promise to Joseph. He presented himself before Pharaoh, and narrated the incidents connected with his own dream and the baker's;—the "young man, a Hebrew, servant to the captain of the guard," might perhaps solve the mystery of these dreams.

Joseph was hastily sent for, but the summons found him not in a condition to appear before the king. Although trusted by the jailer, he was still a prisoner, and the false charges made by Potiphar and his wife were still resting upon his name. He had consequently in this long time of his grief and disgrace allowed his hair to grow; and the court etiquette would not permit even the monarch's curiosity to be gratified until the young man was put in proper condition to appear before him. Joseph was shaved[1] and becomingly clothed, and was then led through the halls of the grand palace and into the presence of Pharaoh.

It was a very striking scene; the architectural magnificence all around, where centuries of human skill and labor had combined to deify the monarch himself in men's eyes; the king, feeling himself still mortal in his perplexity and troubled by a dream, now eyeing the young Hebrew with keen and scrutinizing looks; the magicians and wise men standing by, relieved from the fury of the monarch's wrath, and so far thankful to Joseph, yet, with all this, keenly jealous of him, and hoping that he would somehow make a failure; the courtiers, admiring the young man's good looks and his composed though not presumptuous bearing in the presence of the king, and with their admiration and hopes mingling also many fears for him in the coming trial of his skill; the butler, now almost as nervous as the monarch; Joseph, the centre of all eyes, feeling that God had surely and clearly come to his aid, and would be his

[1] Gen. xli. 14.



TUTHMOSIS III. (Tetmes-Ra-men-Kheper). Thought to be the Pharaoh of Joseph's time.

(Copied by careful tracing from Lepsius' book.)

helper here. The crisis of his life he knew had come; God would be with him in it. So he was calm.

Pharaoh said, curtly, in words that did not show much confidence in the young man—

"I have dreamed a dream, and there is none that can interpret it; and I have heard say of thee that thou canst understand a dream to interpret it." The answer was—

"It is not in me; God shall give Pharaoh an answer of peace."

The monarch narrated both dreams as they had occurred. Joseph replied—

"The dream of Pharaoh is one; God hath shewed Pharaoh what he is about to do. The seven good kine are seven years; and the seven good ears are seven years: the dream is one. And the seven thin and ill-favored kine that came up after them are seven years; and the seven empty ears blasted with the east wind shall be seven years of famine.

"This is the thing which I have spoken unto Pharaoh: what God is about to do he sheweth unto Pharaoh. Behold, there come seven years of great plenty throughout all the land of Egypt. And there shall arise after them seven years of famine; and all the plenty shall be forgotten in the land of Egypt; and the famine shall consume the land. And the plenty shall not be known in the land by reason of that famine following; for it shall be very grievous. And for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice; it is because the thing is established by God, and God will shortly bring it to pass.

"Now therefore let Pharaoh look out a man discreet and wise, and set him over the land of Egypt. Let Pharaoh do this, and let him appoint officers over the land, and take up the fifth part of the land of Egypt in the seven plenteous years. And let them gather all the food of those good years that come, and lay up corn under the hand of Pharaoh, and let them keep food in the cities. And that food

shall be for store to the land against the seven years of famine, which shall be in the land of Egypt; that the land perish not through the famine."

We shall give in the next chapter an account by an eye-witness of a famine in Egypt; but we cannot by reading even it have an idea of the horror which crept through the hearts of all those listeners to Joseph's interpretation, when he came to the prediction of *a general famine* in that land. If his hearers had not witnessed, they had at least all heard, of extreme cases of this kind occurring now and then by the entire failure in the river floods, if only for a season or two; but here, when the idea broke gradually upon them from his words that the famine would be *for seven years and absolute,* consuming the land, they stood horror-stricken, as if they could already see all those frightful things with which description had made their ears to tingle, now already come upon them. It was too terrible for belief,—they thought;—and yet even among those who doubted most, and tried hardest to reject belief, there was still a fear creeping through all their being, horrifying and paralyzing them in spite of their determined rejections.

As to Pharaoh, he led the way to a consultation with his lords and counsellors. All had been struck with the modest and respectful yet composed bearing of the young man. He had spoken not presumingly yet confidently; he spoke as if he was really guided by the unerring Power that he said was giving him the utterances; and they had seen in his eyes and heard in the tones of his voice a confidence thrilling them by its terrifying nature, but showing no presumption in him. They felt overwhelmed and crushed by what seemed to be coming. "*Seven years! the land consumed!*" No wonder that the council held by the king was an agitated and gloomy one!

And yet, after all, it might not be. Thus many of them tried to satisfy themselves. The king, however, was con-

vinced. His dream had been so vivid and all so life-like, while strange, that he yielded to a belief in the interpretation; all acceded to the soundness of Joseph's advice; the doubters thought that, as the seven years of plenty were to be first, there would be a long time—a safe period in which to make up their minds for what was to come afterward; but the king felt himself called upon, as the father of his people, to act at once.

It would not require much questioning of the captain of the guard and the keeper of the prison to satisfy him that Joseph's administrative qualities were of the highest order; and also that everything under his hand had prospered while he was with them. The monarch "said unto his servants, Can we find such a one as this, a man in whom the spirit of God is?" and the words of this question will bring to the reader's memory what has just been remarked in this book, namely, that the Egyptians deified the attributes of God, and had a deity which they called "The Spirit of God." This god was called Kneph or Neph, and was represented by the Uræus (asp), which hence became an emblem of royalty, and may be seen sculptured over the forehead of Tuthmosis III., and still more strikingly in the case of the other Pharaohs given in this book.

Could he find any one—the king thought—so fit to prepare the land for the terrible calamities before it? The office would indeed require the highest rank and authority, but any gift which the royal power could bestow would be wisely and well bestowed if it could save the country from the horrors seemingly so surely to come.

Therefore, before the seven years of plenty had begun, which was not long subsequently to this, Joseph had been made chief ruler under the king, who had taken off the signet ring of highest power and had given it to him; "had arrayed him in vestures of fine linen and put a gold chain about his neck; and made him to ride in the second

chariot which he had,"[1] while runners before cried to all in the way to "bow the knee." The monarch said to him, "I am Pharaoh, and without thee shall no man lift up his hand or foot in all the land of Egypt;" "only in the throne will I be greater than thou." This was indeed a case of most extraordinary power given to a subject; but the duty before Joseph, that of taking by compulsion, if this should be necessary, sufficient of the seven years' surplus products to serve all the country during the long scarcity, and to store it away, would require immense power to be vested in the chief executive officer of the kingdom. Pharaoh also changed the name of Joseph to *Zaph-nath-paaneah*, said by some critics to mean the *Revealer of Secrets*.[2] Still more to bind him to the interests of the country, and doubtless also to honor him further, the monarch gave him for wife Asenath,[3] the daughter of Poti-pherah, priest of On.

On, called also by them *Ha-ra*, "the abode of Ra," or the sun, and by the Greeks *Heliopolis*, "city of the sun," has already been noticed in this book as pre-eminently the sacred city of Egypt, and was about fifteen miles northeast from Memphis, near the eastern bank of the Nile. It was, in more respects than one, a gem among their cities; for it was not only highly embellished as their most holy spot, but it

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[1] "A vesture of fine linen was especially the dress of the Egyptian priests as well as of the king himself, whose transparent upper garments of fine linen are known by the monuments. (Compare Herodotus ii. 37.) The elevation of Joseph into the most distinguished class of the priests or princes is shown by this laying on of fine linen garments." "Precious necklaces and chains were bestowed by the Egyptian kings as particular marks of distinction. Several very illustrative representations of this, from Thebes and Tel-el-amarna, will be disclosed in the work of the Prussian Expedition." "At festive processions, the chariot of the queen used to follow that of the king, and after it the chariot of the princes. Joseph was thus treated like a son of a king."—*Ancient Egypt under the Pharaohs*, by John Kenrick, M. A.

[2] The Septuagint says it was *Psouthom Phanech*, meaning *saviour of the age*.

[3] The name is said to mean *servant of Neith*, the Egyptian Minerva.

became also what may be called *the Oxford of Egypt*, a place famous for learned men; and was resorted to by distinguished persons from other countries in order to be instructed in the Egyptian learning. Herodotus resorted to it for information; Strabo came at a later period, and to the latter was pointed out there the house in which Plato, three centuries and a half previously (about 390 B. C.), had spent three years under the instruction of the Egyptian priests; indeed, these Grecian philosophers imbibed, at On, most of the learning which they afterward disseminated over the world.

The city was built on an artificial platform made to secure it fully from high inundations; it was not of very large dimensions, but was richly ornamented with temples and their appurtenances and with dwellings for the priests. Before the great temple stood the obelisk which is still a solitary relic of the past grandeur, presiding over the immense level wastes; formerly, doubtless there was another of the size of this, which is sixty-eight feet above its base, for such embellishments went in pairs; and from them, leading to the great gateway of the city, was an avenue of sphinxes, of which travellers think they can still trace remains. Our word obelisk is said to be from *Uben-ra* or *Uben-la*, *Sunbeam*, or *Finger of the Sun*.[1] Close by the temple was a large fountain of pure, cool water, an object scarcely to be seen in any other part of Egypt, and still existing, though now choked by weeds; this also was sacred to this god. In the temple was a huge mirror of burnished gold, so contrived as all day to reflect the beams of the sun,

[1] It is curious to see how the ancient heathen usages and names have incorporated themselves into languages and usages all over the world. The obelisk, the favorite shape for monuments in Christian cemeteries, is a relic of the sun-worship. It is scarcely necessary to add that the names of all our days in the week, and of most of the months, are from those of heathen deities.

and diffuse them through the building. Over the portal of the building we may imagine the statue of their sun-god, here represented by a hawk-headed monster; for the sharp-eyed hawk was considered a good emblem of their deity. "Enter; and the dark temple opens and contracts successively into its outermost, its inner and innermost hall; the Osirides [sculptured figures] in their placid majesty support the first; the wild and savage exploits of kings and heroes fill the second; and in the furthest recess of all, underneath the carved figure of the sun-god and beside the solid altar, sat in his gilded cage the sacred hawk, or lay couched on his purple bed the sacred black calf, *Mnevis* or *Urmer*, each a living, almost incarnate, representative of the deity of the temple. Thrice a day, before the deified beast, the incense was offered, and once a month the solemn sacrifice. Each, on his death, was duly embalmed and deposited in a splendid sarcophagus. One such mummy calf is still to be seen at Cairo. The sepulchres of the long succession of deified calves at Heliopolis corresponded to those of the deified bulls at Memphis."[1]

We are able thus to judge of the situation of Joseph in Egypt, and of the influences at home and abroad throughout the nation, over which, as executive, he was now fully installed. Idolatry, with its whisperings of reason for its origin; with its appeals from outward objects—the sun-god warming and vivifying all nature; with its gorgeous temples of most imposing architecture and splendid worship; with its priests embodying the learning of the country, and jealous of all other learning and other worship;—such were the outside influences upon Joseph. At home was the wife, brought up at On, and bound by all early associations, by her education, and by all the ties of filial affection, to the religion of her father, whose name itself, Poti-pherah, *Be-*

[1] Stanley.

longing to Rah, or the sun, seemed to make fidelity to him and her religion synonymous. Then also his patron Pharaoh, and the courtiers, and all his associates throughout the kingdom exercising public or silent influences;—everything indeed, at home or abroad, was of a nature to draw off the young man from his allegiance to God.

Yet he seems to have been unswervingly faithful to Jehovah. He was also so far from disclaiming his origin that he gave Hebrew names to the two sons born to him during his honors, calling the first MANASSEH, "*Forgetfulness*," and the second EPHRAIM, "*Fruitfulness*," "For God," he said, "hath caused me to be fruitful in the land of my affliction."

CHAPTER XXI.

THE NILE,—LIFE? OR DEATH?

PLENTY; *then famine; seven years of each;* such had been the announcement to the Egyptians! The news of this interpretation of the dreams was carried quickly all over the country, and was variously received. The reverence for the monarch was universal; and every one believed also that the dreams had some special meaning: but the interpretation had been hidden from their wise men; and notwithstanding the king's decision, there were doubters everywhere respecting the judgment of this young man, a stranger, one of a different religion, and, moreover, just taken from a prison where he had been placed on a heinous charge. The community wished to doubt; for although no one could object to the prospect of seven years of plenty, that of such a subsequent famine was so appalling to every one's mind as to create almost a determination not to believe in

the possibility of such a thing. Indeed, although there were traditions of very frightful famines, one of such continuance had probably never yet been known, and seemed to be scarcely within the range of possibilities; people tried to believe it utterly impossible.

Yet such determination, and also forced conviction when this could be attained, left in the minds of even the most resolved, a restless, anxious feeling, a nervousness and a watching that showed to themselves that their protestations against belief were not solidly built. All knew, however, that one part of the prediction must soon be put to the test by the nature of the next rising of the Nile; and for this all waited now with the deepest interest. When the swelling of the stream did commence, the rise was watched by every one as it had never been watched before. Terrible in the minds of all was the thought of the famine—*a famine for seven years:* the possible plenty was little regarded in the comparison with such subsequent possible horrors; in every one's anticipations those latter seven years were already, as in the dream, blasting all sense of comfort in any anticipations respecting the preceding ones.

In order that the reader may better see what a horror there could be in such expectations, he will here be presented with an account of a famine in A. D. 1199, by an eye-witness, Abdallatif, a learned physician of Bagdad, at that time a resident in Egypt.

It may be proper to say now that the valley of the Nile is six hundred miles long by an average of nine miles in width, except at the lower end, where the mountains which bound it retire on either side, and the stream, then branching into three channels, sweeps along in what is called the Delta, a vast extent of perfectly level country more permeated by moisture than that above.

It is singular that the two great mysteries of Egypt,—the language of the hieroglyphics and the sources of the Nile,

should have yielded their secrets to persevering research at periods so near to each other, one in 1822, the other within a few years; for the origin of the river, which Nero tried in vain to discover by means of his centurions, and which continued to defy scrutiny from that down even through Mehemet Ali's all-powerful rule, has been discovered by English explorers; first by Speke and Grant in 1862, and then more fully by S. W. Baker, accompanied by his wife, in 1864. The former discovered the great lake Victoria Nyanza, and Baker the adjoining, still larger lake, Albert Nyanza, both lying at the equator, and by the mountains adjoining them and confluents, giving rise to this so long mysterious stream. The river is fed by them in a full and pretty regular flow, till it is joined by the Blue Nile in about 15° and the Abara about lat. 17° N. These two latter streams are the causes of the periodical overflow. They rise in the mountains of Abyssinia, which in summer are deluged with rains; and from being,—the former an innavigable stream, and the latter scarcely more than a dry channel,—they become immediately rivers of great dimensions, pouring down the accumulations of water and earth from the interior of that country. Mr. Baker says, "At that season the White Nile [from the lakes] is at a considerable level, although not at its *highest;* and the sudden rush of water descending from Abyssinia into the main channel, already at a fair level from the White Nile, causes the annual inundation in Lower Egypt."

The rise in this lower part of the stream commences about the middle of June, and continues increasing through July. In August begins the general overflowing of Egypt, which is regulated by means of sluices made in the banks (for the banks are higher than the rest of the valley); and soon the country resembles a vast lake, with only at intervals specks like islands, at spots where the villages are built. The flood finally remains stationary for twelve days, and

then begins to subside; and toward the end of October the river has returned within its banks. As soon as the waters have subsided sufficiently, the grain is scattered over the wet ground, and without further labor, if the flood has been sufficient, it soon changes the whole aspect of the country into smiling verdure, a forerunner of most ample agricultural wealth. If the rise of water is up to sixteen cubits, the inhabitants know that a sufficiency for comfort has been secured; a rise to eighteen cubits gives them supply enough for two years, even after the government duties have been paid; if it reaches nineteen cubits, the subsidence will be too late for the proper sowing-time and a scarcity ensues. All below sixteen cubits is followed more or less by scarcity; and the suffering is greater in the same proportion as the scantiness of the flood is short of this.

The reader is probably aware that rains are almost unknown in Egypt, and that if they do come, it is in quantities scarcely sufficient to wet the ground for a few minutes. The life of all the inhabitants is involved in the simple fact of the sufficient rise of this river.

We can very well imagine then, the deep interest with which the *Nilometer*, a column near the ancient Memphis, graduated for showing the rise or fall of water, is watched; and the eagerness with which the official reports made from it, are received throughout the country; the nervousness at certain critical parts of the flood; and the universal joy or universal despair, according as the river decides.

In the first stages of its rise, a green scum with aquatic mosses and vegetable fibres is seen on the surface; and it is a bad sign if these are not borne quickly away by the force of the current washing out the nooks of the shores; still worse, if the water begins to assume a green tinge, and has a bad odor, showing decomposition in its sluggish depths. In the year 1199 it became insufferable to taste and smell, and all who could do so had recourse to water

from wells. Abdallatif boiled some from the Nile; "but that only made it worse, and when he let a portion of it stand in a narrow-necked bottle, and had taken off the scum, he found the water, though clear, as fetid as ever. This lasted in that terrible year all through June, July and part of August; and beside the putrid vegetable matter, there were worms and other creatures that swarmed in the stagnant waters."[1]

For four centuries previous to A. D. 966, the river had only six times failed to reach fourteen cubits; and about twenty times only it stopped at fifteen cubits. In 966 it rose only to twelve cubits and seventeen digits; in 1199 only four cubits higher. In June of this last year people were already greatly alarmed by the indications on the sluggish stream. Through July the unfavorable signs increased; in August, alarm was giving way to despair; on the 9th of September it was announced that the water was subsiding. All hope was gone!

The other scenes of this year we give in the words of Abdallatif: "Under these circumstances, the year presented itself as a monster whose wrath must annihilate all the resources of life and all the means of subsistence. There was no longer any hope of a further rise of the Nile; and already therefore the price of provisions had risen; the provinces were desolated by drought; the inhabitants foresaw an inevitable scarcity, and the fear of famine excited tumultuous commotions among men. The inhabitants of the villages and country estates repaired to the great provincial towns; large numbers emigrated to Syria, Magreb, Hedjaz and Yemen, where they dispersed themselves on every hand, as did formerly the descendants of Saba. There was also an infinite number who sought retreat in the towns of Misr [Old Cairo] and Cairo, where they

[1] "Eastern Life."

experienced a frightful famine and mortality; for when the sun had entered Aries, the air had become corrupt, pestilence and a mortal contagion began to be felt; and the poor, pressed by a continually increasing famine, ate carrion, corpses, dogs, and the dung of animals. They went further, even devouring little children. It was not an uncommon thing to surprise people with infants roasted or boiled. . . . I myself saw in a basket an infant that had been roasted. It was brought to the magistrate, and with it a man and woman who were said to be its parents, and whom the magistrate sentenced to be burned alive. . . . .

"When the poor began to eat human flesh, the horror and astonishment caused by the practice were such that these crimes were the material of every one's conversation, and the subject seemed inexhaustible; but afterward people became so accustomed to it, and such a relish began to spread for this detestable food, that some came to make it their ordinary meat, to eat it as a treat, and even to lay in a stock of it; different ways of preparing this flesh were made known; and the use of it being once introduced, the custom extended to the provinces, so that there was no part of Egypt where it might not be met with. Then it no longer caused any surprise; the horror which it had first inspired ceased to be felt; and people spoke and heard of it as an indifferent and ordinary thing. . . . .

"There were children of the poor, some in infancy and some growing up, who had no one to look after them, spread through all the quarters of the city, and in the narrowest streets like locusts that are beaten down in the fields. Poor people, men and women, lay in wait for these wretched children, carried them off and ate them. It was rarely that they could be detected in the very act, and when they were not on their guard. . . . In the space of a few days as many as thirty women were burnt [for this], every one of whom confessed that she had eaten several children. . . . .

"This frightful calamity, which I have just represented, extended over all Egypt; there was not a single inhabited spot where the practice of eating human flesh did not become extremely common. . . . .

"As for the number of the poor who perished from hunger and exhaustion, God only knows what it was. What we shall say of it must be regarded only as a slight sketch which may convey some idea of the fearful excess reached by this mortality. One thing of which I may speak, as having seen it myself, at Misr, at Cairo, and in the neighboring places, is, that wherever we went, there was not a spot in which one's feet or one's eyes were not encountered by a corpse or a man in the agonies of death, or even a great number in this dreadful state. Day by day, from one hundred to five hundred dead bodies were taken from Cairo to be carried to the place where they might have funeral rites. At Misr the number of the dead was incalculable. They were not buried, but merely cast out of the town. At last there were not enough living left to carry away the dead, and they remained in the open air among the houses and shops, or even in the interiors of dwellings. . . . .

"As for the suburbs and villages, all the inhabitants perished except a small number, of whom a portion quitted their abodes to go somewhere else. We must scarcely except from what I have now said the capitals of the provinces and the largest villages. . . . . A traveller often passed through a large village without seeing a single living inhabitant. He saw the houses standing open, and the corpses of those who had lived there stretched out opposite one another—some decayed and some recently dead. Very often there was a house full of furniture, without any one to take possession of it. What I am now saying has been communicated to me by several persons whose narratives confirmed each other. One of them said as follows:—'We arrived at a village and there found no living thing on the

earth or in the air. . . . . From thence we went to another village, where we were told that there had been till now four hundred weaving-shops; and it presented to us the same scene of desolation as the first. We saw the weaver dead in his loom-pit and all his dead family around him. . . We then proceeded to another village, where we found things just in the same state; no creature living, and the inhabitants all become the prey of death.' . . . .

"According to the testimony of a great number of witnesses, the road between Egypt and Syria was like a vast field sown with human bodies; or rather like a plain which had just been swept by the scythe of the mower. It had become as a banquet-hall for the birds and wild beasts which gorged themselves on their flesh; and the very dogs that those fugitives had taken with them to share their exile were the first to devour their bodies."

CHAPTER XXII.

ABUNDANCE—FAMINE.

ALL over Egypt, then, as the time for the annual rise drew nigh, there was a nervous excitement, an anxiety, a wide hope, a universal dread. Dread was strongest, and the horror about such a famine as had been predicted often swallowed up every other thought.

We can well suppose also that, amid all this, there were great jealousies at work respecting Joseph himself and his vast honors, especially in the court; enmities among the wise men and magicians; scorn among the priests at his religion; while everywhere busy tongues, of their own accord or put in motion by others, were trying to do him harm, and to

counteract his influence in the government. But Pharaoh was with him; and, what was far better, God was on his side.

June, so eagerly looked for, came at last; and with it, the flood, now the subject of so many inquisitive thoughts. The river soon swept along, bearing on its swift waters all green slime and scum; the signs for a fruitful season quickly became of the most decisive kind. Fourteen cubits were before long officially reported at the Nilometer, and from mouth to mouth all over the country; then fifteen; then sixteen. The sluices were now all open, the land was fast becoming entirely submerged;—all except the usual island-like spots of safety for their villages and herds, and also at the banks.

Seventeen cubits now! There could have been a fear in some hearts that their gods would take offence at the elevation of this foreigner of another religion, and have taken vengeance by a failure of the river; but no! they were not angry, but were giving full tokens for a most abundant season.

"Eighteen cubits!" Joy and sorrow came with the annunciation; a bright certainty; and with it a deepening dread; for here in these indications of a most abundant season,—just what the interpretation of the dreams had predicted,—was an intimation that the horrible prediction of the seven years' famine would also prove true. They dared not let themselves think of this latter. They would have preferred to have the flood stand still at the lower figures, even although it was now to give them a more than a two years' abundant supply.

But would it remain at this? or go higher yet? The gods, offended, might show their anger by drowning their land in an excess of the favorite boon, and indeed this would be no unworthy manner of showing their resentment!

But no! The waters had begun to subside. After

reaching the eighteenth cubit mark, or about that, they had become stationary; and now the Nilometer was showing a retrograde movement of their level.

A vast abundance was before the inhabitants, yet they were disappointed and grieved. The broad prediction for the next fourteen years was of such a nature that anything tending to confirm it filled them with dread. So, everywhere over the country, as the quiet waters were now dropping their rich pabulum on the ground, people's feelings were agitated, and the prospect of a coming rich harvest was a subject not so much of joy as of gloom.

But still, this one year was not decisive (so they argued). Perhaps the next one would put a contradiction on that fearful prophecy. They would wait and hope.

The king and Joseph, however, did not indulge in any quiet waiting. The former, if we are right in our supposition as to the individual, was a man of remarkable force of character, of extensive views in government, and great determination of will; and having decided on his course respecting the closely-coming events, he gave to his Prime Minister, who might indeed almost be called Viceroy, the fullest power for such precautionary measures as the latter might deem best. Joseph was now thirty years of age. The golden royal gift about his neck, the costume as a prince of the household, and the chariot with significant devices, next only to those of the king, gave him authority wherever he might go; and before the beginning of the yearly flood he had gone "throughout all the land of Egypt," forming plans and giving orders for measures to save the surplus of the coming abundant crop. Therefore, when after the flood above noticed the teeming earth became an unbroken scene of exuberance sufficient to fill with gladness the hearts of a people not oppressed, as they were, with that dread of coming woes, his agents had storehouses ready; in due time, doubtless, either by purchase or because the sovereign had

the right of possession, the fifth part of the grain was gathered into them and safely stored away. To every individual in the kingdom it was evident that Pharoah and Joseph were earnest believers in the dreams and the interpretations. People looked on approvingly and disapprovingly; every store-house seemed to them to be as a prophecy of horrors, and a confirmation of fears which they were unwilling to have enter their hearts and were fighting against. Seven years of famine! The whole land to be consumed! The thing was not to be thought of, if the thought could be kept away; and yet here, constantly staring at them, were the seeming proofs that such a time must come. At all events, come what might, they saw that the precaution was a wise one. But the prospect was terrible!

Thus time wore on; and then June came round once more. Again the people were watching, scanning the river-banks, scanning its surface, noting every inch of rise. Again they saw the mosses and green scum swept rapidly away by the rushing waters; again they saw the gradual but sure increase of the flood. Sixteen cubits! Seventeen! now up to eighteen! there stationary! and then again the subsiding commenced, just as in the previous year!

People now resigned themselves to what seemed clearly to be the inevitable. More readily than in the past harvest season, they assisted in this one, and gave up the surplus of their crops, and helped to fill the store-houses; looking on all now with a kind of dogged despair. Tongues which had publicly or secretly charged on Joseph that he was trying to frighten both king and nation, grew silent; and hands which were reluctant before or quite held back, were readily stretched out to assist; and every one saw with satisfaction the increase of stores in which their only hope was now beginning to rest. It was true that there had been only two years of this superabundance; and the predictions might, after all, turn out to be false; but then two such extraordi-

nary years, taken together with the dreams of their sovereign, were satisfactory to most persons; and therefore, to the great ferment of thought and feeling throughout the nation there now succeeded the quietude of a confirmed belief, gloomy as it was. They concluded to take with satisfaction the abundance while it was still theirs.

A third year passed like the former two; and then a fourth; and then three others, making the seven. The next one was to initiate the famine!

But in the mean time all the store-houses had been filled. "Joseph gathered," says the Sacred Record, "corn as the sand of the sea, very much until he left numbering; for it was without number." In every city there were deposits of grain so immense that the people had a feeling of safety even for the coming dreaded crisis. Since they had become satisfied that it would come, they had been constantly turning their eyes toward these granaries, as places where was their only hope, and toward Joseph as their great benefactor; and now, when all was over, and the time for the dearth had come, they folded their hands and waited in subdued feelings and patient resignation, with a knowledge that no resistance or no effort on their part could avail anything.

In the next year the river, as all now expected, failed to rise. We know what were the first precursors of such a failure; the slow gathering of its slimy matter into side eddies, where this decomposing substance moved sluggishly, and then rested and turned into poison; and then the offensive character of the taste and smell of the water itself, till people turned from their once precious beverage in disgust. Then came the rise by such slow degrees that the inhabitants thought it useless to watch or make report; then the resting of the flood at a low degree; and then the decline. All had expected it; no one felt surprised; no one felt horrified; that latter feeling had came to them long before, and had been indulged till it had died away in one of des-

pair. Despair was now the most familiar of all feelings in the land.

Then the whole valley soon turned to powder; plants, herbage, trees, all vegetation perished. The entire population would also have perished if it had not been for the provident care of the king and Joseph; and all now yielded their grateful acknowledgments, increasing in warmth every year, as the frightfulness of the dearth was also becoming greater year by year.

The store houses were opened, and grain, as it was needed for man and beast, was served out. The Prime Minister showed his right knowledge of human nature in not making the distribution gratuitous; for that would have made the inhabitants lose their self-respect, and would have humiliated them into feeling themselves to be paupers, each in his own eyes and in the regard of others; but he sold the grain, doubtless requiring little for it, but making them feel that it was theirs by purchase, and not given to them degraded as beggars living on the public bounty. They were able thus to preserve one of the best feelings in our nature—their self-respect,—a feeling with which even a slave may be a noble man.

CHAPTER XXIII.

MEETING WITH THE BROTHERS.

TWO years of the famine had passed away. The interpretation of the dreams had declared that it should "consume the land;" which was indeed the case; and the long drought which was drying up the sources of their river had also reached other countries, producing in them a similar

result. The inhabitants of neighboring lands, informed of the foresight that had been exercised in Egypt, resorted to that country now for supplies.

One day, as Joseph was engaged in the multifarious duties of his office, ten men, foreign in person and costume, presented themselves as applicants for grain, and bowed down before him with their faces to the earth.

THEY WERE HIS BROTHERS!

He knew them at once, but they failed to recognize him; indeed, had not the slightest suspicion that Zaphnath-paaneah, the mighty Governor of Egypt, before them, was the brother whom, twenty-two years previously, they had sold to the Ishmaelites. He was now thirty-nine years of age, and the time intervening had made great changes in the person of him who had been the stripling of the parti-colored garment. His head was now clean shaved; and the bald crown or the close-fitting cap or the elaborate heavy wig would, any of them, be alone sufficient to change his appearance beyond the power of recognition among men who had never once dreamed of meeting him in circumstances like these.

A thrill ran through him as he saw them stooping and making their obeisance. His dream came back to his memory, and the scene at home when he was narrating it all flashed up before him. Then, as they rose and stood before him, came also that scene at Dothan; the savage expression of their faces there, his entreaties and his agonized expectation of death at their hands;—all this was flashed upon his memory now. There they were,—his savage, cruel brothers! His eye was lighted up with many strange sensations in the quick glance he gave them; then he noticed that Benjamin was missing. Had they also made way with him?—*He would know.*

"Ye are spies," he said; "to see the nakedness of the land ye are come." They answered meekly,

"Nay, my lord, but to buy food are thy servants come. We are all one man's sons; we are true men; thy servants are no spies."

He wished to drive them into disclosures about home, while they were here in his power; and he knew, at the same time, how treacherous their answers might be. He repeated,

"Nay, but to see the nakedness of the land ye are come." They replied,

"Thy servants are twelve brethren, the sons of one man in the land of Canaan; and, behold, the youngest is this day with our father, and one is not."

"That is it that I spake unto you, saying, Ye are spies. Hereby ye shall be proved; by the life of Pharaoh ye shall not go hence except your youngest brother come hither. Send one of you, and let him fetch your brother, and ye shall be kept in prison that your words may be proved, whether there be any truth in you; or else, by the life of Pharaoh, surely ye are spies."

They were put into confinement, and kept there for three days; and a time it was to them of very bitter reflection, and of many harrowing reminiscences of the past. This land into which they had sold their brother into slavery had become their place of punishment; they felt the retribution to be just. For twenty-two years they had kept up a lie before their father; his long and deep sorrowing for their brother, in which he had refused to be comforted, not having moved them to a disclosure. Heaven, they must believe, had marked it all. Joseph's fate they could not tell; they only knew that in the land into which he was sold, slavery was a hard and unpitied existence. Perhaps he had perished under it by slow degrees. It was their act. And here, now, in this land, they felt that God was bringing on them punishment for their dark crime toward him, and for the long-sustained deception toward their father in his over-

whelming grief. On the third day they were sent for by the Governor, who then addressed them:

"This do and live; for I fear God. If ye be true men, let one of your brethren be bound in the house of your prison; go ye, carry corn for the famine of your houses; but bring your youngest brother unto me; so shall your words be verified, and ye shall not die."

They listened to him with countenances in which deep trouble was showing itself; there was a present partial relief; but perplexities, with great additional grief and reproach from their father, had yet to be encountered. The power of conscience which had been at work in the prison, now took words, and they sadly murmured to each other,

"We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us." Reuben, who, it will be remembered had formed a plan for delivering him at Dothan, but which was of course unknown to the lad, added now,

"Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child; and ye would not hear? therefore, behold, also his blood is required."

Joseph had been conversing with them through an interpreter, and they had no suspicion that he understood what they were saying. Their words opened the deep, long-closed fountains of his heart, and he could scarcely keep from giving his feelings vent before all the company. He went out and wept.

On returning, while still retaining his incognito, he took Simeon (next to the oldest), and had him bound before them, and then he dismissed them for their homes. Previous to their departure he had directed his steward not only to fill their sacks with grain, but to put at the mouth of each one the bag of silver brought for payment. He may have wished to test their honesty in this, or, if they should con-

sider the money as a gift, to afford them means for sending again without embarrassment to those at home.

In that long time in Egypt he had, except in a small portion of his prison-life, been always so intently occupied, that new feelings had, in a measure, crowded out those for the family in Canaan. There was little, indeed, to make him cultivate such remembrances; for the very affection of his father, so ill-judged in its manifestations, had been the chief means of his misfortunes there, and had very nearly caused him to be murdered by his brothers. The reminiscences were so painful that in selecting a name for his oldest son, he chose that of *Manasseh*; "for God," he said, "hath made me forget all my toil and all my father's house." We are not in this justifying such forgetfulness, but merely showing how easily it could come to one constantly so full of occupation in his new home.

But the affections were only slumbering, not destroyed. The sight of his brothers and one kind word from them, roused up all the old tenderness for them, and still more for the father; and as soon as he could do so, he gave every manifestation of his returned fulness of love.

At the close of this first interview, provender for the beasts on the return journey had also been supplied; and on the way, one of the brothers, opening his sack for such supply, was surprised to find his money there. On his hastening to mention the fact to the others they became greatly alarmed. "What," they said in their fear, "is this that God hath done unto us?" Trouble was leading them toward God.

Jacob in his tent near Hebron was waiting anxiously. He had not reason to be confident in those sons; and by and by there seemed to be an unnecessary delay about their return. Moveover, before their departure for Egypt, want had begun to be felt in all the families at this encampment; and it was now beginning to be severe. They came at last,

—not all, for one was missing. Simeon had become the father of six children; all the encampment hurried around the returned nine to listen to their history of the journey; and on its being given there was universal alarm, but especially in Jacob's and Simeon's tents. There was something mysterious to the apprehension of all in the conduct of the Egyptian governor. One thing was plain,—that one of their number was still in his power, as a pledge for the appearance there of Benjamin; and the old man, they feared, would not ever be induced to part with this, the youngest of his sons, and, since the loss of Joseph, the favorite one. The mystery in the Governor's conduct was further increased in their eyes, when, as they now opened all their sacks, each was found to contain the owner's bag of money at its mouth. It appeared plain to them that somehow or other, there was a design against them all. The aged father's alarm immediately took chiefly the direction of the youngest; he was borne down by the fearful accumulations.

"Me have ye bereaved of my children; Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away; all these things are against me." Reuben answered,

"Slay my two sons if I bring him not to thee; deliver him into my hand, and I will bring him to thee again." The answer was,

"My son shall not go down with you; for his brother is dead and he is left alone; if mischief befall him by the way in the which ye go, then shall ye bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave."

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE FULL RECOGNITION.

TIME passed on. The drought still continued in Canaan, and by degrees the grain brought from Egypt to these families was all consumed. The food was most carefully economized; for every one knew how desperate must be any effort to move the aged man from his resolution not to allow Benjamin to go, and how useless and, indeed, how dangerous it would be for them to present themselves without him before the Prime Minister of Egypt. To come thus, they thought, would be verifying in his eyes the charge that they were spies. But they all waited for the father to be the first to speak, knowing that he must speak in the end; for the want must, at last, become unendurable to every one. Indeed, as they saw the faces of all in the encampment grow wan and thin, and heard the cries of the children for food becoming more frequent and also weaker; and saw the old man's sympathies becoming wider and stronger, they felt that his obstinacy must soon appear to himself to be selfish and wicked, and would give way. He said at last, briefly, as if distrusting himself, fearful of the result:

"Go again, buy us a little food." Judah answered,

"The man did solemnly protest unto us, saying, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you. If thou wilt send our brother with us, we will go down and buy thee food; but if thou wilt not send him, we will not go down; for the man said unto us, Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you."

Jacob made complaint of their informing the Governor that they had a brother; to which Judah replied, explaining again the closeness of his inquiries; and now, seeing the

resolution of the father giving way, he followed up the appeal from the sad, thin faces all around;—

"Send the lad with me and we will arise and go; that we may live and not die, both we, and thou, and also our little ones;" offering also to be surety for him and to take on himself all the father's blame for ever, if he did not restore Benjamin to him.

Jacob yielded, and directed them to get ready for the journey. They were to take to the Prime Minister a present of such things as their destitute country could afford, "a little balm, and a little honey, spices, myrrh, nuts and almonds," and also "double money" in their sacks,—that formerly returned, and also some for the present purchase.

"Take also your brother, and arise, go again unto the man; and God Almighty give you mercy before the man, that he may send away your other brother, and Benjamin; if I be bereaved of my children, I am [indeed] bereaved."

So they went down again into Egypt, taking very good care of this youngest brother on the way. Joseph was waiting, half-expectant and half-doubtful whether they would again appear: for it was questionable in his mind whether this brother still existed or not. When they appeared before him again, he scrutinized them keenly. Was this Benjamin? The youngest son was only about two years old when he had seen him last; the word of these men could not be fully trusted respecting him, for they had lied in the former interview about Joseph himself. Still the Governor, even amid doubts, felt his heart yearn toward the young man with an instinctive feeling, as if their account of him must be true. He made no demonstration, however, more than to order the ruler of his house to take them to his palatial residence, and there to make ready for an entertainment to them. They were greatly alarmed; for all the actions of the Governor respecting them were suspicious: the money returned, evidently through design, was a mys-

tery; the demand for Benjamin, a mystery; this present honor, a mystery; they looked at the grand halls of the palace and its splendid adornings, the abundance of submissive servants in every part, and the respectful regard paid to themselves, only with one feeling,—a creeping, paralyzing fear. They were helpless there, and thought they saw proof of designs upon them, and, as they concluded, for no good end. Connecting the new events with the return of the money in their sacks, as if these might be with some purpose of entanglement, they sought the steward of the house, and made to him explanations and assertions of their innocence respecting the silver. The man satisfied them about this; and their feelings were still more relieved by seeing Simeon, now released from prison, added to their group. Water was brought them for the necessary ablutions; they next prepared their presents, and when the Governor at last rejoined them, they offered these, making before him the customary obeisance. Again flashed on his mind that dream at home. There had been another dream including his father. He hastened now, after the customary salutations to themselves, to ask, in assumed calmness, yet nervously, about him:

"Is your father well, the old man of whom ye spake? Is he yet alive?"

"Thy servant our father is in good health, he is yet alive," they said, with another obeisance.

"Is this your younger brother, of whom ye spake unto me?—God be gracious unto thee, my son;"—but he could say no more; for the look, the address to the young man, brought such a gush to his feelings that he could not remain without betraying himself. He went out into his private chamber, and there let his heart overflow in its tenderness and find relief in tears.

Having recovered himself and removed the marks of his weeping, he returned, and ordered the feast to be prepared.

Caste among the Egyptians was very strict, and they never ate with people of another nation. Separate tables were therefore set for them in the banqueting-hall; another table for Joseph's brothers; one alone for him, the High Administrator over the kingdom. The brothers remarked with surprise the order in which they were seated at table; Reuben first, the youngest last, as if the age of the former was known. The Governor sent messes to them; Benjamin's five times as large as any of the others. They all had good appetites; for this meal was such a one as they had never seen before, and to which the recent deficiencies at home helped to give a new zest. Hope, too, had come into them, and a degree of confidence; and they drank, and, if only from respect to their host, tried to let a feeling of joyfulness have its way in their hearts.

The Governor's eye was quietly, and, as far as it could be without creating suspicion, carefully observing them all the while. He had reason for observation, and for quiet, unobserved inquiry in his mind respecting them. Was this Benjamin? he was asking of himself. His heart had just filled as he looked upon the young man and addressed him, and was near overflowing merely at the thought of his being the son of that dear mother whom, with her strong love to himself, he remembered so well; and the features looked as if they might belong to such a son; but he knew these other brothers well, and their baseness and lying; and this might, after all, be only a counterfeit brought to him, because they had to bring some one with that name. Benjamin might be dead,—perhaps killed by them; or might be at home with the father; or the report that their father was yet alive might even itself be false. Doubts, when they once enter the mind, soon multiply; and from the character of these men, there was really much occasion for doubt.

Joseph concluded to have further proof. There could be no excuse given for detaining them longer; and he must in

all reason let them go; but before the final dismission, he directed the steward of his house to put his chief drinking cup of silver into the sack of the youngest, together with the money he had brought, concealing them there.

The eleven departed most joyfully. Simeon was with them again; their sacks were full of grain for their needy and expectant families; they felt that they had escaped safely from those strange mysteries at the Governor's palace; they had been well entertained and highly honored—curious truly it all was—but they were safe!

As they journeyed on just beyond the precincts of the great city, talking about the recent singular events, and all of them filled with gladness at the thought of getting safely home, they were overtaken by the Prime Minister's steward reaching them in great haste. They turned to greet him, and may have thought it was perhaps for some new honors to be conferred; some joyful message to carry to to their father; some rich present it might be. No! his words were scathing!

"Wherefore have ye rewarded evil for good? Is not this it in which my lord drinketh, and whereby, indeed, he divineth? Ye have done evil in so doing." They answered with the honest expression in their faces of wronged men, but still with alarm; another mystery!

"Wherefore saith my lord these words? God forbid that thy servants should do according to this thing; behold, the money which we found in our sacks' mouths, we brought again unto thee out of the land of Canaan; how then should we steal out of thy lord's house silver or gold? With whomsoever of thy servants it be found, both let him die, and we also will be my lord's bond-men." The steward said—

"Now also let it be according unto your words; he with whom it is found shall be my servant; and ye shall be blameless."

They all acted with the promptitude of men consciously innocent; and yet there was a cold fear creeping through every heart. So much mystery in that palace! Some strange design doubtless now! And how easy for a man all-powerful as was this Governor, in this way to carry out a bad design! The sacks were all placed on the ground; the steward examined them, beginning with Reuben's and so going down to the sack of the youngest:—

THE CUP WAS FOUND IN BENJAMIN'S SACK!

There was no word from them; only a mute horror and despair. They rent their clothes and laded their animals again, and returned to the city.—Along its crowded thoroughfares;—among its wan, suffering people, on whom was the dull horror of a two years' famine in the land, with the expectation of five more yet to come;—among all the sights of abjectness and misery with the sounds of gloom and despair;—among all these, there was nothing to compare with the utter wretchedness of this company, who now in torn garments followed the steward toward the great lordly palace. They entered its courts and found the Prime Minister there, and they fell before him on the ground. His countenance showed profound emotion.

"What deed is this that ye have done?" he said. "Wot ye not that such a man as I can certainly divine?" Judah answered,

"What shall we say unto my lord? what shall we speak? or how shall we clear ourselves? God hath found out the iniquity of thy servants; behold, we are my lord's servants, both we and he also with whom the cup is found." He replied,

"God forbid that I should do so; but the man in whose hand the cup is found, he shall be my servant; and as for you, get you up in peace unto your father." Judah came near to him;—all formality and distance of respect broken through in the intense distress.

"O my lord, let thy servant, I pray thee, speak a word in my lord's ears, and let not thine anger burn against thy servant; for thou art even as Pharaoh. My lord asked his servants, Have ye a father or a brother?"—and he went on briefly over the incidents in their former visit respecting these two; and then the parting of their father with Benjamin;—and he added,

"Now therefore, when I come to thy servant my father, and the lad be not with us (seeing that his life is bound up in the lad's life); it shall come to pass, when he seeth that the lad is not with us, that he will die; and thy servants shall bring down the gray hairs of thy servant our father with sorrow to the grave. For thy servant became surety for the lad unto my father, saying, If I bring him not unto thee, then I shall bear the blame to my father for ever. Now, therefore, I pray thee, let thy servant abide instead of the lad a bond-man to my lord; and let the lad go up with his brethren. For how shall I go up to my father, and the lad be not with me? lest, peradventure, I see the evil that come on my father."

Joseph could contain his feelings no longer. The offer to remain a bond-man in the young man's place, when, if there had been an imposition, they might have readily yielded up the impostor, satisfied him that this was indeed his youngest brother. His heart needed no promptings; he gave orders to have all but these men leave the hall; then he wept aloud and cried out—

"I am Joseph; doth my father yet live?"

The brothers stood aghast at the revelation! *He, Joseph!* whom they would have murdered, whom they sold for money, who must have long treasured resentments, who had plotted and drawn all these mysteries about them, and now had them completely in his power!

Aghast and mute, they had not a word to say. Conscious that he knew them well and all their wickedness, they felt

that it was useless to attempt explanation or excuse. They shrunk at the towering greatness of the man even far more than they had ever done previously; for he was now, they might suppose, their bitter enemy. They stood, without a word. He however, quickly spoke:

"Come near to me, I pray you;" and they came near. He added,

"I am Joseph your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now therefore be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you to preserve life,"—and he went on to state how long the famine was yet to last, and God's goodness in making him an instrument for saving also their race from perishing; and then his thoughts flew back with stirrings of all fond affections toward his father and home. They were, he said, to go back immediately and bring his father and all that belonged to him, descendants and households and flocks and herds and retainers, "all," in short, "that he had." He would give them room in Goshen, a choice grazing-ground in Egypt, in its low surface moist, and perhaps yet green when all the upper valley was like dust; that should be their home under his protection, and he was now able to protect any whom he might choose.

Such words came from him no longer in calm or lordly style; for his heart was full of tenderness, and he could wait in it only to reassure them. "Then he fell upon his brother Benjamin's neck, and wept; and Benjamin wept with him upon his neck. Moreover, he kissed all his brethren and wept upon them; and after that his brethren talked with him."

Reports of all this soon reached Pharaoh's ears. The strange circumstances previously attending the advent of these men, and especially the steward's orders respecting them, had made them objects of close attention, and had sharpened men's ears, and the bursts of feeling at the recognitions had been overheard; now, the great news that the

Prime Minister's brothers were in the palace induced action from Pharaoh himself. The monarch might well take an interest in everything connected with Joseph; for this was now the second year of the prevalence of the famine, and proofs had multiplied every day, that his wise foresight had truly saved the nation from extinction. Pharaoh, but for him, would have ruled over an utter solitude, if he had ruled at all;—over a land strewn with festering corpses, with not a live being left,—all life of man or beast extinct. Five years were yet to come; but the granaries were still abundant in stores. There was suffering, and over all the country was a heavy gloom, and there would be more; but this was not extinction, as would have been but for this wise and great man, in his greatness not haughty, in his power unassuming and gentle, though firm; even the courtiers had given up their jealousy in the universally felt relief through his wisdom; and they now also united with the monarch in the gratification at the presence of his brothers. Pharaoh sent for him, and gave directions that from the royal magazines of chariots and other conveniences for travel, everything necessary should be furnished for bringing the whole Israelite people, with their dependants, down to Egypt, where—so Joseph was authorized to say to them —"I will give you the good of the land of Egypt, and ye shall eat the fat of the land. . . . . Regard not your stuff, for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours."

The men were furnished accordingly. To each of them Joseph also gave changes of raiment; to Benjamin, five changes and three hundred pieces of silver; for his father he sent "ten asses, laden with the good things of Egypt, and ten she-asses laden with corn and bread and meat" for the journey. Fearful that the new prosperity and the distinctions might give rise again to jealousies and dissensions, he gave to his brothers, as they were leaving, the significant advice, "See that ye fall not out by the way."

CHAPTER XXV.

JACOB IN EGYPT.

AT Hebron, a very strange sight not long after this, greeted the eyes of the people. It consisted of a succession of wagons,—a vehicle scarcely known in that country of hills and nomads,—and with these, long lines of asses laden with choice articles of food and raiment, all more particularly remarkable in this time of poverty and drought. Crowds of lookers-on gathered, as they had gathered before, on the return of this company from Egypt, but not now, as then, with feelings ending in dismay; for men swift of foot had spread the news that all the brothers were there, Simeon and Benjamin, as well as the rest; and gladly answered the rapidly-put questions, as to what that wonderful sight of the approaching wagons could mean. Soon Jacob himself,—an old man now, and tottering with age, was among them. He was scarcely allowed time to ask what this meant, for the cry rung in his ears,—

"*Joseph is yet alive, and he is Governor over all the land of Egypt!*"

The old man did not believe what he heard; yet the words were so thrilling that they brought a coldness and faintness to his heart. The announcement, though there might seem to be no possibility of truth in it, was sufficient to be an ice-bolt sent through him, so abrupt was it, and unexpected, and strange. But as the sudden faintness passed off, his eyes took in the scene of wagons and great lines of loaded animals; and moreover Benjamin was soon by his side, and he felt reassured. Then they recounted to him all Joseph's words, and told him of the glory of his lost son, the most powerful lord in that land. But all the lordship

and power and glory in Egypt were of little moment to the old man's heart compared with the simple fact of his son's living; the strong tide of his affection swallowed up everything else. To their descanting on what their eyes had seen of the splendors and honors concentrating on Joseph, he answered in his one thought,

"It is enough; Joseph my son is yet alive; I will go and see him before I die."

The preparations were soon made; for the life of a nomad is so simple that at any time they can quickly be ready for moving; and the aged father was anxious to be gone. No one held back; for all the others were desirous to be, as soon as possible, connected with the richness and glory of the Egyptian court. The news had spread rapidly among the Canaanites around them, and the admiration and wonder and envy of these neighbors stimulated still more the self-gratification of the Israelites; while the famine left no desire to remain in that land. So the whole tribe was soon in motion, not only the direct descendants of the aged chief or sheikh, and their wives; but also his retainers, who must have been numerous and also glad to go. We know that Abraham had among his adherents three hundred and eighteen men fit to bear arms, and also that all the males among his people, whether purchased or born there, were subjected to the Jewish rite,[1] and consequently were considered a part of his tribe or nation. Jacob had probably as large a tribe, probably much larger (see Gen. xxxvi. 7), and it would now have been great cruelty to leave them here in want when abundance for him and them was offered in Egypt. Therefore undoubtedly they accompanied him, making the Israelite nation going down into that country far more numerous than his own immediate family. This subject is an important one in connection with the question

[1] See Gen. xvii. 23.

sometimes started respecting the great increase of the Israelites in Egypt.

Driving the cattle and flocks before them, and with the aged chief and the women and children in the numerous wheel conveyances, the whole company moved on toward Egypt in highest gladness, with songs and instrumental music and shouts such as only such general joy could inspire. They took, however, not the most direct route by the coast, but by Beersheba, to which Jacob could scarcely expect ever to have another opportunity of making a visit. We know that his affections were peculiarly strong; and they are the great redeeming quality amid the subtleties and deceptions in his earlier life. For these deceptions he had paid dearly; and the recent disclosures of his sons' wickedness toward himself brought up before him his own misdeeds toward his father at Beersheba with self-convicting and humbling effect. There, too, he had felt that all-absorbing love of his mother never once forgotten, and which had made his own heart so rich in the affections toward all human beings and especially toward Jehovah. So now he took his way by Beersheba; and there "he offered sacrifices to the God of his father Isaac." And here in a vision the divine word came to him, bidding him not fear to go into Egypt, for God would go with him and make of him there a great nation; adding also that his going there would not be a forfeiting of the right obtained by the promise to give this land of Canaan to his descendants.

Thence he hurried onward toward Egypt; and when approaching it he sent Judah before him to announce to Joseph his coming, and to have preparations made for this large company, according to promise, in the land of Goshen. This region is at the north-eastern extremity of Egypt, and at a part where the waters of the Nile spread out in great arms in their approach toward the sea, and make vast *deltas* or inland islands, all having the exuberant fertility of the rest

of Egypt. The ground being generally low and moist, was better adapted then, as it still is, for grass than for grain, and not only was the region thus a choice one for grazing, but it was also more distinct and separated from the great body of the country. We must not imagine it, however, to be a solitary region, for it was far different, as across it were the great thoroughfares to Canaan and Arabia, and there also, probably at its northern edge near the sea, was a vast fortress of defence, Avaris, erected against hostile incursions from those countries.

Joseph came to meet his father. His road led him by On, and along the great highway by which he had been brought down into Egypt; and thoughts of that sad journey, and of his young resolves on the way, and of his looking to God for help when God was all that was left to him, all now crowded on his recollection. Then his thoughts turned to the coming interview; and the old love, so long kept down, sprung up again more sober now, but beginning to be even stronger than in those early days. How would that father look now? he thought; and memory pictured him as in former times, a grand-looking man, though already gray-haired and with face marked with care and with troubles caused by his oldest sons, but yet with eyes always beaming toward himself, in the true and warm affection filling his heart. They were to meet;—and the heart of the great Governor of Egypt grew childlike at the thought.

Jacob came on, indeed an old man now and tottering and weak, but in one thing young and firm and strong,—the love for his favorite boy. How slowly to him the vehicle that bore him moved on! How long was the road! New and inviting objects everywhere met his eyes, and crowds of faces on the great highway, and varied costumes, but he saw them not. The loud sounds of his cattle-drivers, the music of instruments piping joyfully on this happy journey,

the voices of his children and grandchildren were in his ears, but he heard them not; memory was stirred up, and his mind's eye was now only upon that stripling who had climbed his knee in the old times and had fondled upon him; and his mental ear heard only the lively prattle and the witty sallies of the boy who had been so long the charm in all his tent-life;—the son so strangely lost and now so strangely found, and whom he was about to see once more!

The road seemed interminable, but the long distances were finally left behind them, and the old man at last knew that a larger crowd than usual was coming toward him: then there were runners ahead in gayest liveries clearing the way: then there were loud voices, proclaiming, "Bow the knee," and the Egyptian throngs at the wayside were kneeling in humility: then a high chariot, gorgeous in silver and gold and canopied over with gay silks, appeared. But Jacob saw in all this grandeur but one object—his son! Joseph, too, had no need of any one to inform him which was his father, for his heart's instincts alone would have told him; "he fell on his neck, and wept on his neck a good while. And Israel said unto Joseph, Now let me die, since I have seen thy face, because thou are yet alive."

There was, afterward, a large gathering of the curious, half-eager, half-shrinking, confident yet timid, company around the Prime Minister to receive his salutations and to offer theirs; many wonderings by the little folks at the gorgeous chariot and gay sights; and many speculations by the elders as to their future in this strange country; and Benjamin made conspicuous among all the brethren by Joseph's marked and earnest attentions to him; and then finally, after a period of rest and of enjoyment among all in this most happy meeting, Joseph returned to Memphis, taking with him five of his brothers to present them to Pharaoh, and to receive

from the monarch a grant of land for their residence. He instructed them on the road what to say to Pharaoh in answer to his inquiries, so that they might be assigned to this distinct and separate place of Goshen, where they would not come into collision with the prejudices of the Egyptians against men in their employment; "For every shepherd," he said to them, "is an abomination unto the Egyptians." Accordingly, when taken before the sovereign, in answer to his question, "What is your occupation?" they replied, "Thy servants are shepherds, both we and also our fathers," and they tendered their request for Goshen; to which he answered to Joseph, "Thy father and thy brethren are come unto thee; the land of Egypt is before thee; in the best of the land make thy father and brethren to dwell; in the land of Goshen let them dwell; and if thou knowest any men of activity among them, then make them rulers over my cattle."

Not long afterward, the Prime Minister brought up his father himself to be presented to Pharaoh. The old man was an entire stranger to all the magnificence and grandeur, and to the pomps of royalty, among which he was now introduced; yet the venerable sheikh bore himself with dignity and ease. Indeed, the immense city, with all its architectural splendor, and the gorgeousness of the monarch's palace itself, were not adapted to overawe a man brought up in the wild freedom of mountains and valleys outlined by God's hand, and where he saw God everywhere, while heaven's dome was the fitting vault to this palace of the Almighty, not made with hands: and these crowded streets, where men seemed to be stifled for want of air, and to be in a prison-house, could not but compare unfavorably with the wide, open views and the freedom in the shepherd-life. The old man could stand proudly before the king in the consciousness that this son by his side was far greater in true worth than the Pharaoh; and had indeed, through the Al-

mighty hand, saved the king and his whole nation from destruction.

So the venerable sheikh raised his hands, as he might well do, and blessed Pharaoh. The latter, struck by the snow-white locks and the white, long beard of the patriarch, such unusual sights in Egypt, inquired,

"How old art thou?" Jacob answered,

"The days of the years of my pilgrimage are an hundred and thirty years: few and evil have the days of the years of my life been, and have not attained unto the days of the years of the life of my fathers in the days of their pilgrimage."

After bestowing another blessing he withdrew from the presence of the monarch, who must have been greatly impressed with the appearance and bearing of the old man. If Jacob was proud of his son, the son also had good reason to be proud of his father.

The land of Goshen was allotted to the tribe, where they spread about, getting such pasturage for their flocks as the herbage, scant even in that usually moist region, could afford. The country bordered closely upon On; and it was easy for Joseph personally to see to their wants; he took care that they should all be well supplied during the whole continuance of this dreadful famine.

The famine was indeed eating up all resources, and threatening the entire vitality of the land. Five years of it still remained; and as it went on, month after month in dreary succession, the sufferings of the inhabitants became more and more intensified, until they felt that life itself was scarcely endurable. The Scriptures express the condition rightly: "The land of Egypt and all the land of Canaan *fainted* by reason of the famine."

The Governor still continued his system of selling grain instead of pauperizing the feelings of the people by a free gift; but eventually the money of the inhabitants had all

been gathered into the royal coffers. Then they brought their cattle and exchanged them for corn for their families, the cattle themselves indeed thin and scarcely able to support life on the scanty herbage in the less dried-up spaces of the Delta; thus also cattle and sheep and asses and horses became the property of the king. Then, as the palpitating misery still dragged its way along, only horror, only want, only wretchedness over the whole country, and utter ruin except the relief in the store-houses, the people came to sell themselves to the monarch.

"We will not hide it from my lord," they said to Joseph, "how that our money is spent; my lord also hath our herds of cattle: there is not aught left in the sight of my lord, but our bodies and our lands: wherefore shall we die before thine eyes, both we and our land? buy us and our land for bread, and we and our land will be servants unto Pharaoh: and give us seed, that we may live and not die, that the land be not desolate."

The monarch thus became possessor in fee simple of the whole land; Joseph also had the people removed to the cities, where he could more easily supply them with food; and thus also he broke up local attachments and helped to bring the inhabitants more completely under the control of the sovereign, the necessity for which will appear in our succeeding chapter. The priests, however, were excepted from this sale of lands; they were already sufficiently attached to the ruler and needed no further subjecting influences; so their supplies from the store-houses were continued as a free gift, which in their peculiar condition they could also accept without too much humiliation of heart.

But those seven horrible years, seemingly endless, were gone at last. The nation so beat down by despair and suffering had scarcely energy enough left in the last of the period to look for a better time; and when it came and the river rose, and got to be yet higher and higher, and then to

the listless eyes presented the old spectacle of a wide deluge in which the rich deposits were, they knew, settling quietly —even perhaps in more fruitful abundance than usual—the hearts of the people remained crushed and their voices were yet hollow and unnatural; so familiar had suffering and despair got to be to every one, and so unwonted was any other sentiment.

When now Joseph opened the store-houses freely to issue to the inhabitants grain for sowing once more, and told them that for the future he would exact from them for Pharaoh a fifth of the produce as a toll on their lands, and spoke of their wives and little ones whom the remaining four-fifths would cheer, they had only energy enough left in their numbed feelings to answer submissively,

"Thou hast saved our lives; let us find grace in the sight of my lord and we will be Pharaoh's servants."

By degrees, however, as the grain sprung up, and the whole great valley turned once more green in the growing crops, and far and wide the waving harvests invited the sickle, the vitality of the nation reasserted itself, and hope and cheerfulness and at last joy came back to the people of Egypt. Year after year of fruitfulness began to wipe out the remembrances of past horrors; and in the mean time, down at Goshen prosperity and rapid increase were also attending the late immigrants there. Jacob lived on in a happy old age, seeing his descendants and also his tribe of retainers multiply; the latter and his own posterity, indeed, made one by their common faith and the common peculiar rite ordained by heaven. He saw also the flocks and herds increasing and spreading in vast numbers over the fruitful pastures: but, among all these sights Jacob did not feel that this was or could be the permanent home of his people; and all these rich, wide plains, even with Joseph near, could not produce a home feeling to him. Then, finally, after seventeen years in the new land,—a period of that calmness

and that quiet and respectful attention and affection which old age loves so well,—the patriarch, knowing that the time for his departure to a far better than earthly home was drawing nigh, sent for Joseph, and exacted from him an oath that, after death, his body should be taken back to Canaan.

"Deal kindly and truly with me; bury me not, I pray thee, in Egypt; but I will lie with my fathers, and thou shalt carry me out of Egypt, and bury me in their burying-place."

Not long afterward it was told the Governor that his father was ill; and taking his two sons Manasseh and Ephraim, with him, he hurried down to Goshen, to his bedside. The patriarch was far gone in the disease, but when told that Joseph was there, he rallied his strength and sat up; and after some words to his son, the two lads were brought before him. Sight had already grown so dim that he did not recognize them and had to ask their names; but love was as strong as ever, and he proceeded to give his blessing to all three,—Joseph and his boys. The latter had been placed by their father according to age, the elder one, Manasseh, on his right, and Ephraim on the left; but Jacob in the divine inspiration within him, crossed his hands, and although warned of his mistake, still continued to give the chief blessing to the younger; (just as far subsequest events in Canaan justified). To all he said,

"God, before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac did walk, the God which fed me all my life long unto this day, the angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads; and let my name be named on them, and the name of my fathers Abraham and Isaac; and let them grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth."

Then he sent for his remaining sons, and when they had gathered around his bed, he uttered through the divine afflatus a peculiar prophecy respecting each one, having

reference chiefly to the position which their posterity would have after the final occupation of Canaan. That to Judah is particularly remarkable, showing that in this tribe would eventually be the seat of royal power; and that it would so continue until *Shiloh*[1] should come, when the sceptre would depart. For Benjamin the father's affection, if left to itself, would have been glad to predict a magnificent future; it was, however, He "shall raven as a wolf; in the morning he shall devour the prey, and at night he shall divide the spoil." The tribe did, indeed, afterward show itself to be one of violence; but it was an honored tribe; for Saul, the first king, came from it; subsequently also the Christian Paul, in whom the remarkable energy of the tribe became chastened into forming the grand apostle for Christ.

So the end of Jacob had come. After these predictions, he charged his sons to take his body, after death, back to Canaan, and to bury him in the cave of Machpelah, to rest there with the remains of his progenitors. The great wall at Hebron, which we have already spoken of, doubtless encloses the spot where reposed his remains, and where, if violence has not been used toward them, they may possibly still remain; for the Egyptian embalming, as we know, is an effectual security against decay.

"And Joseph fell upon his father's face and wept upon him and kissed him,"—that face now so calm and placid, but which had so often been lighted up in the strong affections for him. Then he gave directions to the embalmers. News of the death had been extended all over Egypt, where

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1 שילה, a word considered by Christians as referring to the *Messiah*. Various explanations of it have been given: 1, as a *proper name*, "till they come to Shiloh;" 2, as an *appellative*, the "*bringer of peace;*" till the "*bringer of peace comes;*" 3, as in the ancient versions, which regard it as compounded of ש contracted from אשר and לה, equal to לו *to him*, both being equivalent to "*which belongs to him*;"—the meaning therefore being "till he comes *to whom it* (*the sceptre or dominion*) *belongs.*"

the sympathy with their Governor who had saved their own lives was general; the Egyptians mourned for him seventy days.

But among the mourners for the aged patriarch were ten men, in whom also a cold fear was mingled with their grief. Those brothers of Joseph had not learned, in those seventeen years in Egypt, to understand him; and their guilty hearts whispered to them that, now the restraint of the father's presence being taken away, he might visit on them their fell purposes of old in regard to himself. They judged him too much by their own bad hearts. In shame, or through fear, they did not dare to appear before him, but sent a messenger:

"Thy father did command before he died, saying, So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin; for they did unto thee evil: and now we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father."

The message so full of distrust, and with his father's name, overcame him to tears; and on this indication they came themselves and fell before him with the words,

"Behold, we be thy servants;"—they had indeed become abject. He reassured them;

"Fear not; for am I in the place of God? But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass as it is this day, to save much people alive. Now therefore, fear ye not: I will nourish you and your little ones."

There was great nobleness in this reassurance of them, by placing it not on the ground of any magnanimity in himself, but because God had a purpose in their act, for the safety of another nation as well as of themselves; he further tried to give them confidence by words of kindness and peace.

When the seventy days of general demonstrations of

grief in Egypt had expired, he sent a message to Pharaoh; —for in his mourning habiliments he could not, according to their usages, present himself before the monarch—stating his father's request and his oath, and asking an interval in which to perform his duty of the burial in Canaan. Not only was it readily granted, but also a large concourse of the "servants of Pharaoh, the elders of his house, and all the elders of the land of Egypt," prepared to bear him company, and assist in the ceremonies. The Israelitish families, except the children, of course made a part of the procession, which was further rendered imposing by the chariots and horsemen, the whole forming "a very great company." Thus they moved on, a long train attracting attention everywhere along the plains of Egypt; then they crossed the intervening sands; and finally they reached the borders of Canaan. The threshing-floor of Atad was by their way, after reaching the latter country; and here they paused for seven days to express their grief among these people, and "mourn with a great and very sore lamentation;" the place had the name afterward of *Abel-mizraim*, "*the mourning of the Egyptians*,"[1] so much did the concourse of servants and nobles and elders of Pharaoh's palace make the whole scene appear to be Egyptian.

We have comparatively little afterward respecting Joseph, in this strange, eventful history. We know that he returned to Egypt and lived there, "he and his father's house;" that he survived his father fifty-four years, and died aged one hundred and ten, after having seen "Ephraim's

[1] Our version of the Scriptures says, "which is beyond Jordan," seeming to convey the idea that this was on the east of that river; but in 1 Kings iv. 24, the same Hebrew expression is twice translated, "*on this side* the river," which the connection there shows indeed to be the true meaning. A journey, in this case, to any spot east of Jordan, would have been a very circuitous one.

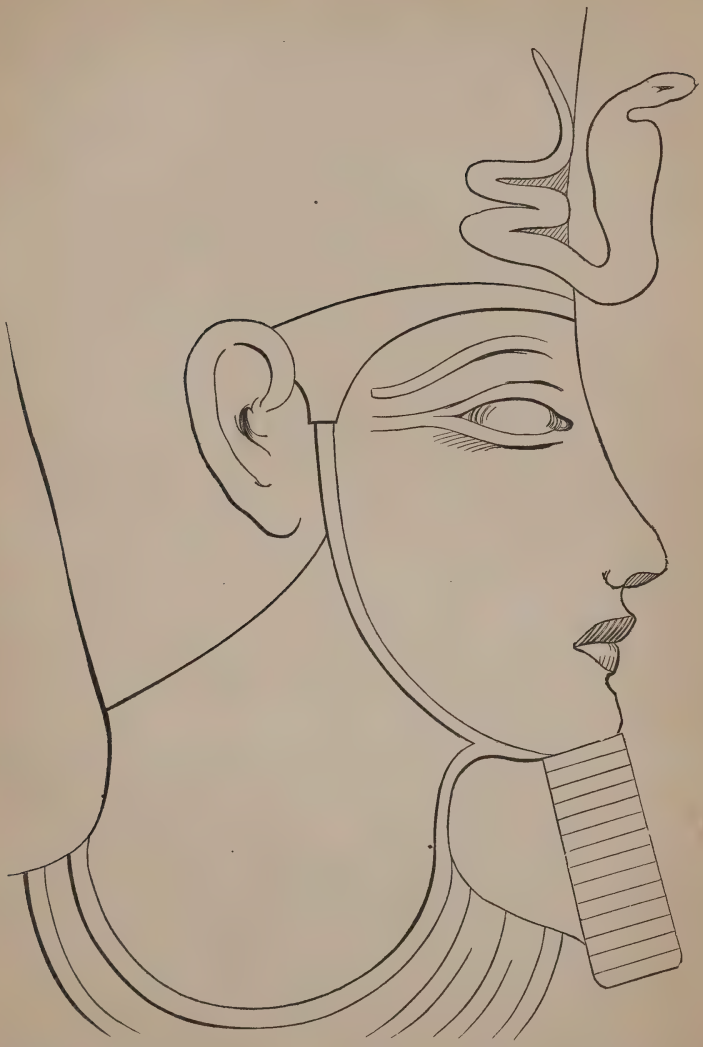
children of the third generation." When he was about to die he said to his kinsmen, "God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land, unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob;" and he took an oath of them, "God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence." His body was embalmed and placed in a coffin in the usual Egyptian manner;—and afterward, through long years of suffering among the Israelites,—when rulers arose "who knew not Joseph," and the enslaved descendants of those whom he had brought to this land were groaning in most bitter bondage,—they still thought with hope of this coffin, keeping a careful record of its place of deposit; and solaced themselves with the expression of the deceased great man, that the time was surely coming when, *God visiting them, they were to bear that body to their nation's promised home in Canaan.* It got at last to be their only earthly hope.

CHAPTER XXVI.

FROM JOSEPH TO MOSES.

WE have now before us a long period of obscurity respecting the Israelites, in which we catch only glimpses of them, but those glimpses extremely interesting, inasmuch as the subject ends in that great disruption from Egypt, the Exodus. The monuments[1] afford us the means of knowing much of the Egyptian history of that period; and as there is, of course, a parallelism between Egyptian events and those among the Hebrew race, we turn to the former to ask

[1] The reader will not be misled by the word. It means temples, halls, &c., &c.—monuments of antiquity.



HORUS I. (Har. Ra-usr-kheper. u.) The superstitious Pharaoh, thought to be the one "which knew not Joseph."

(Copied by careful tracing from Lepsius' work.)

what enlightenment they can give us respecting the Israelites during those times? In questioning them, however, we must be careful to remember that these records were made by the monarchs themselves, each for his own reign; and that as they were designed to glorify that reign, or the country, we need not expect to find there anything of a disastrous kind to either; also we may have occasion sometimes to form our conclusions more from strange *deficiencies* in these public records, than from what is actually given. Bearing this in our mind, we shall perhaps find on the monuments very striking elucidations of this obscure, because brief, portion of the Scripture history.

The first monarch after Joseph's death appears to have been Horus I., the proofs of which we here append in a footnote, in order not to interrupt the course of our narrative.[1] He was just the kind of person concerning whom a faithful historical record would be apt to say, "Now there arose up a new king which knew not Joseph;" by which doubtless we are to understand, not one who was ignorant of Joseph's great

[1] Chronology is one of the most difficult, and is often the most unsatisfactory, of all subjects coming under the notice of a historian. It is also a dry topic to the reader, but we must enter upon it if we wish to study these elucidations from the monuments.

We are brought first to an examination of the interval between the coming of Jacob into Egypt and the period of the Exodus. In Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, ch. iii. 16, 17, the time between the former and the giving of the Law is stated at 430 years. Josephus (Antiq. ii. 15, § 2), gives the Exodus as "430 years after our forefather Abraham came into Canaan, but 215 years only after Jacob removed into Egypt." In Antiq. viii. 3, § 1, he makes the interval nearly the same, 428 years: in Antiq. ii. 9, 1, he gives it as 400 years. In Ex. xii. 40, as read in our Hebrew Bible, it is stated, "Now the sojourning of the children of Israel who dwelt in Egypt was four hundred and thirty years;" but the Septuagint gives the same passage thus: "Now the sojourning of the children of Israel which they sojourned in the land of Egypt and in the land of Canaan was four hundred and thirty years:" Ἡ δὲ κατοίκησις τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραὴλ ἣν κατῴκησαν ἐν γῇ Αἰγύπτῳ καὶ ἐν γῇ Χανααν, ἔτη τετρακόσιαν τριάκοντα. The Samaritan Pentateuch, which must have belonged to a period earlier

services to the nation, but who wished to make no recognition of them; and under the pressure of present fear and selfish prejudice, desired as much as possible to bury them in oblivion. Bunsen, drawing the character of Horus from the monuments, describes him as "a superstitious sovereign,

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than 975 B. C. (the date of the revolt of the ten tribes), gives this passage exactly in the same manner as the Septuagint. In Gen. xv. 13, the time of servitude is set down at 400 years; but this may perhaps be considered as the whole time of being "strangers," and thus under the control of others in the strange lands. The other passages bearing on this subject, Ex. vi. 16–19 and Num. xxv. 57–59, are of uncertain meaning, inasmuch as we do not know the estimate for a generation; but they seem to incline to the estimate of 215 years between Jacob's coming into Egypt and the Exodus.

After weighing this evidence, we take the last record given in the Scriptures, that of St. Paul, with which the other evidence coincides, or may be explained so as to agree, and estimate the time between Abraham's coming into Egypt and the Exodus at 430 years. We have, then, after Abraham's so coming, an interval to the birth of Isaac 25 years; then to the birth of Jacob 60 years; and 130 years to the immigration of the latter; making in all 215 years; and leaving 215 from that immigration to the Exodus. Joseph died *æt.* 110 years; 71 after the immigration, and 144 before the Exodus.

We will now connect these dates with those of the Egyptian kings; and inquire whether from both we may not be able to ascertain who were on the throne at the times of Scriptural events? For we know that the distinctive character of these Pharaohs must have had important influence on such events. In making out the lists and dates of sovereigns who ruled over that country, Egyptologists have been guided—I. By "the Tablet at Abydos" (discovered in 1818 and carefully copied—it has since been defaced), on which had been cut a series of monarchs, 26 in number, who are represented seated under their cartouches; II. By a tablet at Karnak containing a series of 61 kings disposed in four lines around the walls: III. By the Lists of Manetho, as we have them preserved by Josephus and other ancient writers. Bunsen considers the tablet at Abydos as "the surest test of every attempt to restore the dynasties," which we are now considering. From this and a comparison with other monuments and sources of information, he has constructed a list of sovereigns and the time of reign to each, which appears as if it might be safely taken as authority. The following will show us the result, to which also is attached part of the list from Manetho, as quoted by Josephus, beginning after the expulsion of the Shepherd-kings:

devoted to the priests, and a contemplative enthusiast." The edifices which he erected in Egypt are in the best architectural style, but the sculptures on them are of a mystic and religious tendency; and it was by his order that before one of the temples at Thebes was made that splendid avenue

Bunsen's list from the Tablet of Abydos and other monuments.	*Time of Reign.*	*Manetho's lists (See Josephus, Con. Ap.* I. § 15).	*Reigned.*	
	Years.		Years.	Mos.
1. Amosis (Aahmes, Ra-nab-peh)	25	1. Tethmosis	25	4
2. Amenophis I. (Amenhapt. Ra-ser-ka	13	2. Chebron	13	
3. Tuthmosis I. (Tetmes. Ra-aa-khe-per-ka), cousin and brother-in-law of No. 2	21	3. Amenophis	20	7
4. Tuthmosis II. (Tetmes. Ra-aa-en-kheper)	22	4. Amesses (female)	21	9
5. Tuthmosis III. (Tetmes. Ra-men-kheper), brother of No. 4	26	5. Mephres	12	9
6. Amenophis II. (Amenkept. Ra-aa-kheper-ru), son of No. 5	9	6. Meperamuthosis	25	10
7. Tuthmosis IV. (Tetmes. Ra-aa-men-kheperu), son of No. 6	31	7. Tethmosis	9	8
8. Amenophis III. (Amenkept. Ra-neb-ma-t), son of No. 7	37	8. Amenophis	30	10
9. Horus, (son of No. 8. Har. Ra-usr-kheper-u).	32	9. Orus	36	5
10. Ramesses I. (Ramessu. Ra-men-peh)	9	10. Acenchres (female)	12	1
11. Sethos I. (Seti. Ra-men-Ma.t), son of No. 10	12	11. Rathosis	9	
12. Ramesses II. (Ramessu. Ra-usr-Ma.t), son of No. 11	66	12. Acencheres [I]	12	5
13. Menephthah (Mari-en-ptheh. Ba-en Ra).		13. Acencheres [II]	12	3
		14. Armais	4	1
		15. Ramesses	1	4
		16. Armesses Miamoun	66	2
		17. Amenophis	19	6

The Amenophis of Manetho it will be observed is the same as Menephthah in the other list. Bunsen supposes that the Exodus occurred in the 6th year of his reign: consequently, going back from that date we perceive that Joseph was made governor of Egypt about the fourth year of Tuthmosis III., and that he died in the 18th year of Amenophis III., or 19 years before the accession of Horus. The birth of Moses would be about the fourth year of Sethos I.: and his flight to Arabia in the thirty-first year of Ramesses II. as Pharaoh.

Chronologists differ respecting the time of the Exodus; Hale making it to be 1648 B. C., Usher 1491, Bunsen 1320, Poole 1652. The reader will probably be gratified if, instead of being asked to accept any of these dates simply on the authority of those names, he can have placed within his reach materials for coming to a determination for himself; which may be done from the Bible, with only one other reference, namely to Josephus, who seems to be competent authority in this case. Josephus says (Bel. vi. 10), that from David's getting possession of Jerusalem to the destruction of that city by the Romans, was 1179 years. Jerusalem was destroyed A. D. 70; therefore the former event was 1109 B. C. David died after reigning in the city 33 years (1 Kings ii. 11): and four years after his death Solomon commenced building the temple (Ib. vi. 1)); that is B. C. (1109–37) 1072. The Exodus was 480 years before this (Ib. vi.

of colossal ram-headed sphinxes raised on pedestals of most costly workmanship, of which figures Rossellini counted fifty on each side in a distance of fifty paces. It was doubtless of him that Manetho, writing about a succeeding king, Menephthah, says, "This king was desirous to become a spectator of the gods, as had Orus, one of his predecessors in that kingdom, desired the same before him."[1] Another peculiar reason for jealousy on the part of Horus respecting the foreign race of the Israelites might well arise from the fact that in his time there was a rival for the throne in the person of an elder brother, whose title on the monuments signifies "a worshipper of the sun's disk," and who introduced the worship of the visible disk of the sun into his new capital in Upper Egypt.

We are prepared to expect of such a monarch, so situated, a record that he knew not Joseph; and to learn that "he said unto his people, Behold the people of the children of Israel are more and mightier than we. Come on, let us deal wisely with them, lest they multiply, and it come to pass that when there falleth out any war, they join also unto our enemies, and fight against us, and so get them out of the land."

The Israelites had already become very numerous. We have seen that Jacob must have brought down with him not only his own immediate descendants, but also his retainers, who had by the peculiar rite of his people become a part of his tribe; and "the children of Israel," we are informed, "were fruitful and increased abundantly, and multiplied, and waxed exceeding mighty; and the land was filled with

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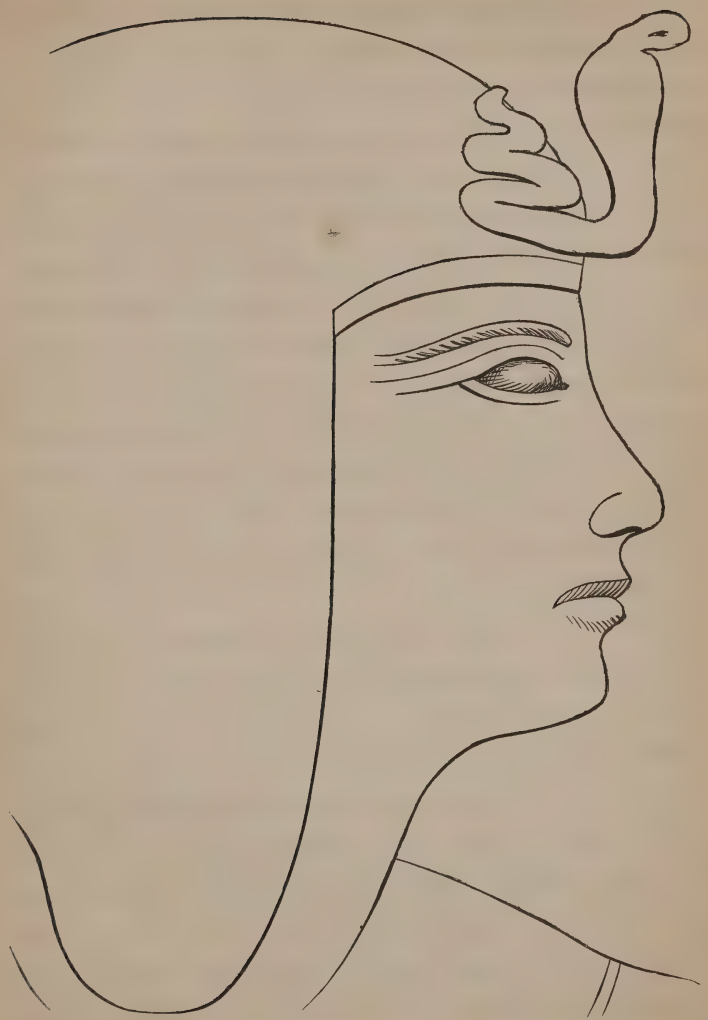
1), consequently B. C. 1552. To this we add 430 years, the interval back to Abraham's visit to Egypt, making 1982; and then allowing 25 years to the birth of Isaac, and 25 additional for Isaac's age at the opening chapter in this book, and we have 1932 B. C., or 3800 years ago, as is there specified.

[1] Josephus, Con. Ap. § 26.

them." Under the Pharaoh of Jacob's advent they had been advanced by their monarch's desire to places of trust; and subsequently they had received Joseph's fostering care; and already they were beginning to be a source of fear to the Egyptians. From the causes just mentioned, they had spread widely over the land; while toward the inhabitants they had no affinities in customs or religion, keeping themselves a distinct race, and, it might seem, ready, sooner or later, to enact over again the former Hyksos rule. They had, however, become too useful to be spared. They were already beginning to be reduced to the condition of bond-men; and a man so magnificent as was Horus in his architectural plans would need such laborers in his constructions; if not for the outward embellishments, at least for the substantial parts of his edifices. The Israelites became bond-men and the bonds were rapidly tightened. They were made to labor; were watched; task-masters were put over them; their state of bitter slavery under the narrow-minded despot and his jealous people soon became complete. The Egyptians quickly learnt to be masters: the Israelites quickly learnt that in a country where all power was in the despots, they must submit. It was a terrible change from their first state in Goshen; but they were without organization for resistance, friendless and helpless as regarded all human means.

Horus, after a reign of thirty-two years, according to Bunsen's computation, was succeeded by Ramesses I., whose occupancy of the throne lasted but nine years; and who, on his death, left the kingdom to his son, Sethos I. If the same chronology be correct, we have in this last monarch a very remarkable personage as respects the Israelites; for although his reign continued only twelve years, not only was he a conqueror of adjacent nations, and the creator of many of the most magnificent palaces and halls to be seen in Egypt, but his were also the most determined and cruel



SETHOS I. (Seti. Ra-men-Ma. t.) Thought to be the Pharaoh in whose time Moses was born.

(Copied by careful tracing from Lepsius' book.)

of all the efforts to check the growth of the Hebrew race. He seems to have been a man of intense energies; and in whatever line they were occupied, to have carried his purposes to extremes, regardless of everything but the accomplishment of his plans.

It was he who issued orders to the Egyptian women, whose employments gave them facilities for such acts, to destroy all the Hebrew male children at their birth. The Israelites had gone on increasing rapidly in number, notwithstanding the hardships which had been accumulating upon them; for "the more they were afflicted the more they multiplied and grew." The indigenous population of the country scarcely needed any stimulants to the exercise of oppression over a helpless people, who by forced service were contributing so largely to their advantage, and the "Egyptians," we are told, "made the children of Israel to serve with rigor. And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service wherein they made them serve was with rigor."

The monarch thought that if the Israelitish males could be gradually exterminated, then a new people might be raised up from Egyptian husbands, which would have the desirable characteristics of the stranger race, combined with Egyptian nationality. Therefore orders were given to those Egyptian women whose peculiar occupation afforded opportunities for such barbarity, to destroy every Israelite male child at its birth. But the hearts of these women showed the tenderness belonging to their sex, and the order was not obeyed, a false reason being invented by them for not complying with the royal decree. Then another mandate followed still more cruel; for, while in the former case the child might have been reported to the mother as never having lived, in the latter, the infant, after having been taken to her arms must, if a male, be snatched thence and

thrown into the Nile. The Egyptian Nile-gods, the crocodiles, would have their feast on the suspected and hated race.

A sentiment of shuddering horror spread through the entire Hebrew people, and reached also the hearts of many of the Egyptians themselves. Yet, the latter argued, it was the only way of saving their own nation from destruction, for these strangers were multiplying to such a degree as to have become truly formidable on account of their numbers. The issue had been made with them by changing their state from that of subject to slave; enmity had been implanted in them, and it would be easy for them to combine with outside nations and assist in an invasion, or even perhaps to rise, and by their own numbers of hardy, active, strong people, without foreign aid to overwhelm the less vigorous race. They were a nation quite distinct, although in the heart of Egypt,—for as slaves they had now been carried to every part of the country; they were keeping themselves carefully and strictly a separate race, repelling all efforts at assimilation with the natives; they avoided Egyptian temples, and treated with opprobrious names both the Egyptian worship and the gods. It seemed to be a demand from the gods, as a duty, to extirpate such a people as far as they could be spared, or to blend them with the indigenous population: the safety of the nation at all events called for decisive measures. So the cruel mandate was sent forth, and a wild and dark horror took possession of all the Israelite people. But this second order was also evaded by the more merciful Egyptian female attendants whenever it could be done.

One day, a daughter of the monarch, coming down with her maidens to the river, saw in the water near the bank a cradle of rushes,[1] and in it a three months' old child,

[1] The papyrus was thought by the Egyptians to be a protection from the crocodile.

already remarkable for its beauty.[1] She knew at once the meaning of the sight before her. The little ark was made skilfully, with such care as only a mother's fingers could supply; and was rendered water-tight by means of lime and pitch. It was a male child, one of those doomed to death, and perhaps put there as an appeal to her tenderness. The sympathies of the daughter of the king were aroused. All the terrible cruelty of that universal mandate flashed before her, as she saw the beautiful infant with those proofs about it of a mother's love and tender care, and even perhaps of hope—if hope might be in such a kingdom, where murderous barbarity ruled. The child was weeping as she bent over it, uttering its little cries for food and its unconscious appeals to her for life. She determined to save it.

The babe had not been unwatched. If its mother had come, her own life might also easily have been the forfeit; but its sister, Miriam, was within watching distance, and keeping earnest scrutiny of all that was occurring. When she saw pity in the face of the king's daughter and the attendants, she immediately made her appearance; and as the sympathy and resolution of the princess became decided, she ventured on a bold offer, "Shall I go, and call to thee a nurse of the Hebrew women, that she may nurse the child for thee?" and permission was given.

The mother, at home, was listening for sounds. Nervous; faint amid the convulsions of hope and fear within her; her mixed thoughts, now on God, now on the tyrant, and again hovering about her child, had no resting-place, but whirled in her brain. Suddenly she heard the sound of footsteps, and knew them to be her daughter's. What was it? She had not time to ask, and perhaps through extreme agitation could not have asked; but there was no need. The very elasticity of step told good news: the joyful face and eyes told more:—the words were even beyond all highest hopes!

[1] See Acts vii. 20.

The mother hurried to the palace, and had her boy again in her arms, though probably the caution engendered by danger kept her from showing that it was her own. She received the order, "Take this child away and nurse it for me and I will give thee thy wages;" and she took it off: and then she gave full vent to the mother's joy and love, and also of gratitude to Jehovah. Could she, after this, fail to trust Him for all that might yet come in this child's life?

The child thrived and grew;—grew under such care and love, and such prayers as the prospect of approaching dangers to it could produce only in a mother's heart: for he was soon—so very soon, it seemed to her—to be delivered back to the princess and to the perils of a life which was to be blended with the corruptions of that court of cruel men. Her faith in God was strong; but still the mother's fears came sweeping back and forth through her heart in spite of that faith. He would, she was aware, grow up an alien even to her. He would hear his race stigmatized, and see the paintings where they were represented in unseemly and disgusting shapes. He would witness the current of jealousy and hatred that was directed as if to sweep the race from the earth. He would be a favored prince among those gorgeous halls, where pride would so readily spring up in any heart and rule permanently there, adapted to make him despise all beneath him, even perhaps his mother. He would dwell among those sculptured representations of their gods, which we know, even now draw out enthusiasm in our enlightened times; and where the priests in those temples were the most honored of all people in the land. He would perhaps himself be made a priest, as indeed, the adopted son of the princess would be expected to be. He might forget—indeed, in such circumstances how could he, she feared, fail to forget—the God of his forefathers, who would then, in return, leave him to himself and to the barbarous

court and to just retributions. His own mother—how could he be kept to know her?—or would he wish to know her?—he, the adopted, cherished son of Pharaoh's daughter. So his mother held him to her heart, as if she would never let him go. She had another son, Aaron, three years older, born perhaps before the edict; and also the daughter, Miriam: but for them, amid the debasements of their race and the gloom, there were no dangers in any respect comparable to those which awaited this child in the coming glory of his prosperity. And yet—so full of contradictions is our nature—amid such doubts and fears and shrinking, her own vanity and pride were fed by the prospective glory of her boy, though the glory would be so perilous.

She kept him, in her fond love, as long as she dared; and then had to give him up to Pharaoh's daughter, "and he became her son." He was called by the princess *Mo-uses*, from two Egyptian words—*Mo*, "water," and *uses*, "saved from water,"[1] a perpetual remembrancer to him of his escape from perishing and of his indebtedness to her.

In the mean while, Sethos I., if we are correct in our chronology, was bringing that intensity of purpose which appears to have been his characteristic, into full action in all the events of his reign. His architectural constructions have been the wonder of all succeeding times, and on them he has left recorded his victories and triumphs, among which is his conquest of "the Shasu" (*i. e.*, shepherds) "in the hostile land of Canaana,"—for so the inscription reads. According to the same record, this was in the first year of his reign; and his warlike struggles there may have given force to his jealous fears respecting the Hebrew shepherd-race, so dangerously, he thought, intruded into Egypt. Bunsen says respecting the hieroglyphic records on these monuments: "Everything combines to render it probable that

[1] See Jos., Antiq. ii. 9, § 6.

the extent of the campaigns of the Tuthmoses and Ramessides, as well as the names of the people which are in part frequently repeated, were, as regards general history, a very narrow one. Wherever we discover an undoubted historical Asiatic name, it is in Palestine or Syria. Here we have Canaan and the Hittites, here also Damascus; and as a general rule, the extreme northern point seems to be Mesopotamia. If then, we compare with this limited theatre of the campaigns and conquests of the Pharaohs of that age, the vast number of names which are recorded as individual peoples, it is clear, in the first place, that no great empire then existed in Palestine and Syria, not even an important state. The second result, and one which is a direct consequence of the other is, that these monuments represent the condition of those countries as precisely identical with what we find in the most ancient accounts in the Bible,—single Canaanitish races, principally nomads, and a few towns, some of which were fortified."

We have not room in a work like this to enter into descriptions of the palace of this monarch—"The house of Sethos," in Western Thebes, or of his buildings across the river at Luxor, or of the gorgeous and important representations pictured in his tomb: but we cannot refrain from presenting the hall of columns which he formed at Thebes, and also taking notice of the temple to which this wonderful hall was but a part of the line of approach. In reading these things we remember that this gorgeousness of architecture was one of the causes of the grinding hardships in the lives of the Israelites, who had, as slaves, to assist in erecting at least the massive walls which are faced by those grand sculptured forms; and we observe also that it was amid these halls and temples that Moses had his education and received his impressions of Egyptian religion, indeed, where he was probably himself a priest.

This hall was reached by passing between two grand and

lofty propylon towers at its front; and when entered opened on the right and left of the spectator, to an extent altogether of three hundred and twenty-nine feet, with one hundred and seventy feet in his front: directly before him was the avenue here presented, consisting of twelve columns, each

Avenue in the Great Hall of Columns at Karnak, Thebes.

column twelve feet in diameter and sixty-six high, without including the base and capital,—with these, ninety feet in height. On the right and left were two hundred and two other columns, each nine feet in diameter, and forty-one feet nine inches high, not including base and capital. All the

central columns yet remain, and of the others one hundred and two are standing; and says Lepsius, "It is impossible to describe the overwhelming impression which is experienced upon entering for the first time into this forest of columns and wandering from one range into another, between lofty figures of gods and kings on every side, represented on them, projecting sometimes entirely, sometimes only in part. Every surface is covered with various sculptures, now in relief, now sunk, which were, however, only completed under the successors of the builder; most of them indeed by his son, Ramses Miamun."

Advancing across this magnificent hall, we come next to another propylon or gateway, formed by two lofty towers; then to where was another court, in which were two obelisks—one of them yet standing, the other prostrate; then by another propylon, now in ruins, to another court, where stands an obelisk ninety-two feet high and eight feet square at its base,—its companion prostrate by its side; next to other propylon towers; then to another court; then another court; then a granite gateway; and then another broad area which led to the holy place; beyond which the ruins of sacred buildings extend to the eastward over a space even greater than that by which we have yet come. "All these vast courts and areas, obelisks, towers and halls," says a traveller, "are, or were, surrounded with columns, sphinxes and statues, and every stone is covered with carving and brilliantly painted. Not only was the temple colossal in its proportions, but it was gorgeous beyond all description in its furniture and adornments." The extent of the holy place, with its approaches, is estimated by Lepsius at two thousand feet.

It may be well, in order to show the full magnificence of this Egyptian worship and its adornments, to add that the successor of Sethos I., in the time of Moses, placed before this hall of columns, and, as an entrance to it, another hall

two hundred and seventy-five by three hundred and thirty feet, with a corridor on each side and a double row of columns across the centre; and that this was approached from the river by a long avenue of sphinxes of colossal size, facing each other. Amenophis III., the Pharaoh immediately preceding Horus I., had also connected his palace at Luxor with the temple of Chunsu at Karnak, by a double row of beautifully sculptured colossal Ammon-sphinxes in sandstone (having the body of a lion and the head of a ram), this avenue being above a mile in length. Rosselini counted them for two hundred and forty paces, and found sixty on each side. This in a mile would make five hundred on each side. That sovereign seems to have constructed also at Thebes an avenue lined with colossal sitting statues of the lion or cat-headed goddess; and the ground in this region is covered with fragments of sphinxes, on which the name of Amenophis may be read, some of them having a human face. There has never been a religion in which such refinements of mysticisms have been combined with such a wonderful architectural impressiveness as in that of Egypt.

CHAPTER XXVII.

MO-USES—"SAVED FROM WATER."

THE close of the last chapter will show the grandeur and gorgeousness of idolatrous worship, and the nature of the influences to which the mother of Moses had to surrender her child, when, in due time, he was sent for and taken to the palace by the daughter of the king. The mother gave him up with many tears, and doubtless also with many

prayers; and then retired to her lowly home with corroding apprehensions that he was probably lost to her and to God. He was adopted as a son by the princess, Thermuthis by name,[1] and was installed into the luxuries of the Egyptian court amid its marble halls, its gorgeous draperies, its sculptured gods, and the servility and flattery of its attending servants, all of whom were of the nobles of the land. It was indeed a place adapted to enchant and win the heart of the Hebrew boy. In costume and manners he soon could not be distinguished from the Egyptians themselves.

Lock of hair worn by Egyptian children.

Head-dress of an Egyptian prince.

(*From Wilkinson's Ancient Egyptians.*)

According to our computation, Moses was born about the fourth year of the reign of Sethos I.; and at the death of that monarch he was about eight years of age. The successor on the throne was Ramesses II., surnamed "the Great," whose rule of sixty-six years is considered the most splendid in the Egyptian annals, although it was the most oppressive of all to his subjects, and was especially so to the Hebrews.

But the Hebrew child in the palace had little consciousness of changes without, sheltered as he was, and petted by the princess and attendants, and under such sunshine of royal favor unfolding constantly in additional beauty and strength. The new monarch soon entered upon a brilliant career of foreign conquests; and then after his return, commenced those architectural designs which have filled all

[1] Josephus, II. 9, 5.

Egypt with splendid halls and temples; the enslaved Israelites meanwhile sinking lower and lower in degradation, and groaning in the abjectness of utmost misery; and the royal protegé, Mo-uses, the "saved from water," every day becoming more a favorite, as he grew into being a bright, happy lad, making the home of his foster-mother lively through his enjoyment of his young life. Soon, however, as he grew older, he commenced taking cognizance of the realities around him; and then the iron began to enter into his soul. People and events were assuming their true character before him: doubts, disgusts, horror swept in succession through him, and at last he felt that such a life as his was a mockery and a disgrace. All this came upon him by degrees, but yet fearful was the awaking from his child-dream; for the heart at that age is more keenly sensitive than afterward, when we learn to harden or control our natures.

During this time the boy, and then as he grew, the man, was initiated into the Egyptian learning, of which he finally gained the complete mastery;[1] and in this at least had something to drive away bitter thoughts.

The Egyptian learning was vast, and very often profound. We have a notice of their forty-two Hermetic books, described to us by Clemens Alexandrinus from genuine ancient authority; and we learn that of these, ten treated of the laws and the gods, namely, of the highest theological education, which embraced at once divine and human laws and philosophy; ten were *liturgical*, about sacrifices, hymns, prayers, processions, feasts &c.; fourteen were on the exact sciences, which were also indispensable to the priests. Of these fourteen, ten embraced the science of writing and drawing, and also all that fell within the department of the measurement of space and of geometry, commencing with *cosmography*, universal *geography*, the

[1] See Acts vii. 20.

chorography of Egypt, and also the *topography* of the temple sites, and lastly the arrangements of the furniture of the temple. The other four, the *astrological*, more properly called by us the *astronomical*, were committed to a particular class of scholars, the *horoscopi*, or time-seers. This portion entered into everything that was necessary to be acquainted with for the calculation of time, especially the stars, the arrangement of the planets, the conjunctions and phases of the sun and moon, and lastly the rising of the stars.

Then came two books of the *chanter*, that is the precentor, a practical leader of the religious and festive songs. His two books contained hymns to the gods and observations on the royal life, as a subject-matter of religious charms. The last six books were on medicine.[1]

Astronomy was cultivated in the most elaborate and complete manner. "We have discovered," says Lepsius, "a division of time less than the hour to the sixty times sixtieth part of a minute; and above an hour to a period of 36,525 years. Between these there were the greatest variety of cycles, such as no other ancient nation, except the Egyptians, have been able to produce in equal perfection. . . . . They recognized as forms of years, and carried out in a calendar both the oldest lunar year, as well as the solar year of 365 days, and the Sirius year, which was one fourth of a day longer. The civil solar year, after twenty-five years, namely at the Apis period, agreed again with the lunar year; in the same way, calculating by the day, it agreed with the Sirius year at a lustrum of four years; and in the space of 1461 years it agreed completely with the *Sothis period*. The Phœnix period of 1500 years was employed to make the civil year agree with the tropical year. Finally the Sidereal year, or the slow receding of the eclip-

[1] Extracted from Lepsius.

tic to the west, became known, and it was expressed, although with an imperfect comprehension of the direction and the velocity of the movement, by its greatest astronomical period of 36,525 years."

Such were the studies cultivated by an Egyptian scholar; and we watch this student of their sciences, Mo-uses, as through long weary days he worked his way more and more deeply into the national lore, his mind oppressed unceasingly with the sufferings of his countrymen. The full extent of the learning of the country was known only to their priests, and the fact that Moses became a complete adept in it seems scarcely to leave a doubt of the correctness of the opinion held by a great many that he was himself enrolled in the priesthood at their sacred city of On. Strabo, who probably took his account of him from Hecatæus, speaks of him as an Egyptian priest; and so does Manetho, who informs us that his name is said to have been also Osarsiph, from Osiris, "who was the god of Heliopolis."[1] As an adopted son of Pharaoh's daughter, he would, according to Egyptian usages, be thus enrolled and thus educated: and the ordinances which afterward came from him for the Israelites when in Arabia show an intimate acquaintance with the Egyptian hierarchy.

We turn to gaze at him then in this anomalous and most uncomfortable position, against which all his feelings had gradually risen into rebellion, and in which the favors he received were grating harshly upon him, as he saw his countrymen ground into the dust by the tyranny of the Egyptian monarch, who was sustained in this by the jealousy and fears of the Egyptian people respecting his race. He had come to recognize himself fully as an Israelite; and although his fetters were of gold, he felt himself still to be a slave among enslaved people, who were now receiving all

[1] Jos. Cor. Ap. I. § 26.

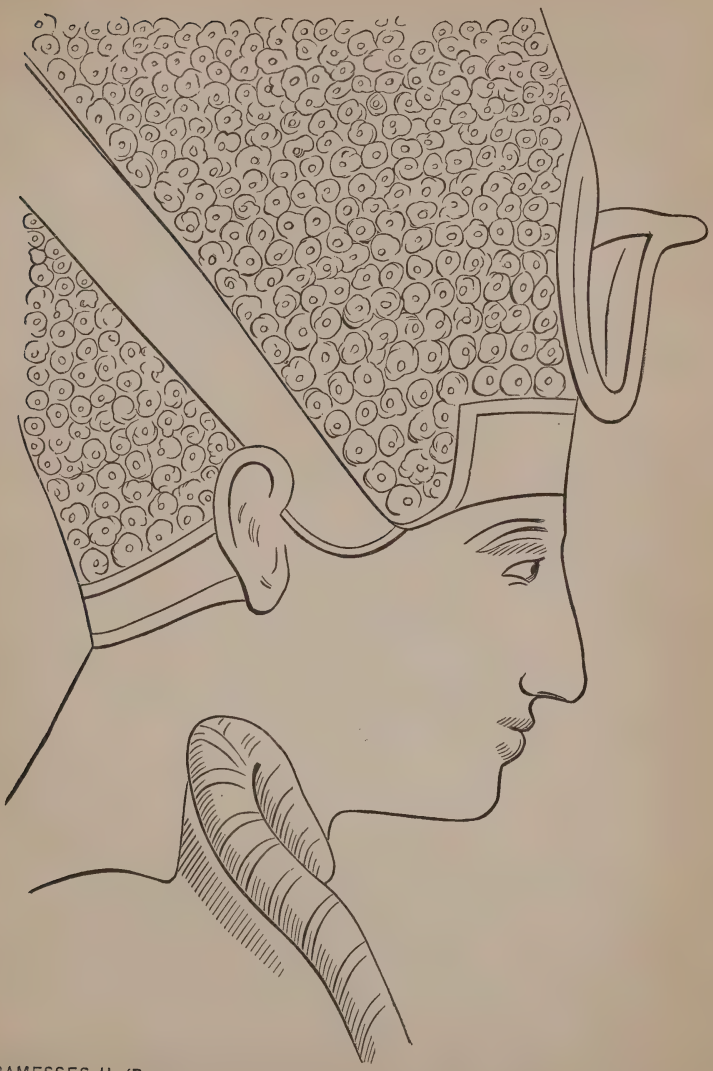
his sympathies. He looked round at the sculptured figures of gods in these magnificent halls and temples, and at Apis and Mnevis, the supposed incarnations of their deities; and amid his honors, which his heart felt now to be degradation, he turned in humility to seek after the God whom his forefathers worshipped, and respecting whom in his now cultivated intercourse with his own people he more frequently heard. Jehovah, even to the Israelites in their debasement and ignorance, was a dimmed vision, but was still adhered to as the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob; and now, though seemingly forsaking them, was still the centre of hopes faint but not quite yielded up—their only hope.

During this condition of Moses and the Israelites, the monarch Ramesses II., mis-called "The Great," was exercising a despotism which has not had a parallel in that country. After his successful wars, during which he had sculptures cut on the rocks near what is now Beyrout representing his conquests and where the figures remain to this day, he engaged in architectural projects so grand and wide that all Egypt is still covered with the wonderful results. Among these are rock-temples, all the walls of which are faced with splendid bassi-relievi, the statues as large as life; also splendid palaces and sphinx-avenues, and propylons and columnar-avenues at Thebes, and colossal statues of himself, one of them at Memphis thirty-four feet and a half in height, and one, a sitting one, at Thebes, forty feet from the seat,—so large that the foot measures eleven feet in length. One of his statues is part of a group in which he is represented as the god Ra, sitting between the gods Ammon and Muth, and giving life and purity to the king, that is to himself. One of his obelisks is now in the *Place de Concorde* at Paris. Many of these Egyptian sculptures are in granite, so hard that the hardest steel makes little impression on it, and yet the figures are cut with a sharpness of angle and outline that always excites

the wonder of the beholder. A beneficent work of this monarch was his canal made from the most eastern arm of the Nile, commencing at Pithom and ending at Ramesses, where he had built two "treasure-cities," noticed in Ex. i. 11; Ramesses was also the starting-place of the Israelites (Ex. xii. 37), in the Exodus. There has lately been discovered on its site a monument containing three figures cut in a block of granite, one of them Ramesses II., between the gods Ra and Tum, and having the cartouches of Ramesses cut on it six times.

It will be seen that the reign of such a sovereign-projector must have been terribly oppressive to all his subjects, and especially so to the enslaved Israelites. We give here a copy of his face taken from the monuments, and the reader will notice the expression, showing a nature cold, decided, self-satisfied, dark and secret. "Who is the colossal figure," says Stanley, in writing about this monarch, "that sits repeated, again and again, at the entrance of every temple? who is it that rides in his chariot, leading diminutive nations captive behind him? To whom is it that in the frontispiece of every gateway the gods give the falchion of destruction, with the command to 'slay and slay and slay'? whose sculptured image, in the interior of the temples, is it that we see brought into the most familiar relations with the highest powers, equal in form and majesty, suckled by the greatest goddess, fondled by the greatest god, sitting beside them, arm entwined in arm, in the recess of the most holy place? . . . . We see his profound yet scornful repose expressed both in countenance and attitude; we see the long profile, majestic and beautiful beyond any of his successors or predecessors. We see even the peculiar curl of his nostrils and the fall of his under lip."

Such was the Pharaoh in the palace, while Moses was growing into manhood, and was then advancing onward, getting mature in years and clear in his observations of rulers and



RAMESSES II. (Ramessu. Ra-usv-Ma. t). Supposed to be the Pharaoh in whose reign Moses fled from Egypt.
(Copied by careful tracing from Lepsius' work.)

people, and was also pursuing his studies doubtless among the priests. All humanity in him revolted against the stern, proud, inhuman despot, and against the minions and officers of the government down through every grade and through the hordes of taskmasters grinding the Israelites and treading this whole population into the dust. Strangely, these people were still multiplying rapidly; their hard labor seeming to give robustness to their constitutions notwithstanding their abasement. But this abasement, and the habits arising from their filthy and crowded habitations, had brought among them a frightful disease, the leprosy, unknown among them before.

Moses had, during these studies and observations, got to be forty years of age. He was an utterly lonely man amid those crowds of priests and courtiers. He had not married, for there was no sympathy between him and these oppressors, and he desired no bonds with them: his thoughts, brooding over his people's wrongs, turned into resentment and quickness of passion: he often left his studies to wander abroad and probe the depth of the degradation and sufferings of his people. One day, while thus abroad, he saw an Egyptian beating an Israelite:—HE SLEW THE EGYPTIAN.

He had taken the precaution even amid this burst of wrath, to see that he was unwatched, and he buried the body hastily in the sand. But the man whom he had rescued seems not to have kept the secret; and very soon the offender against the stern laws of the kingdom became aware that it was known to others. Passing along, he saw two of his own people contending, one of them clearly in the wrong. He reproved the latter; and the wrong-doer, as is apt to be the case in such interferences, turned his rage from his opponent upon the reprover. More than that, the base man was ingrate enough to cast against him his previous act: "Who made thee a prince and a judge over us? intendest thou to kill me, as thou killedst the Egyptian?"

There could be no hope of concealment now. Indeed it soon became evident that the whole matter was known in the royal palace; it was a deadly offence in the eyes of the government. No interest or entreaties by the princess, if she were still living, could save him, and probably he had few or no friends at court. The high position of the offender made the offence the more noticeable. The government knew that those numerous subjects might in their desperation be easily induced to a revolt: here was the bold, quick man to unite and lead them: he must be summarily and speedily dealt with. Moses became aware, in season, of Pharaoh's intent on his life: so he fled hastily from the palace, in the direction of Arabia.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

MOSES IN MIDIAN.

THE refugee little thought, as he hurried on his way, avoiding frequented places, and seeking the most retired spots, and ever glancing behind to see whether or not he was pursued,—that one day he would come along in the same direction at the head of the whole Jewish people delivered by the arm of God himself!

God only could deliver them, so thoroughly broken down and so abject-spirited had they become. But, if a thought of such possible deliverance could now have entered the mind of the refugee, he might well query whether God would see fit to interfere; for the Jewish people had by this time almost forgotten even the very name of Jehovah.[1] Even Moses himself had received but little instruction

[1] Inference from Ex. iii. 13.

of that kind: how could he receive any? His education had been altogether Egyptian. The Hebrews had little, if any, literature; their traditions could come to him in the royal palace or in the temples at On, only in faint sounds, and would be treated with contempt by all about him; and the debased condition of his people was adapted to bring into disrespect any opinions of the Deity held by them.

So, as this man, flying from pursuers, took his way toward Arabia, it was with confused notions on all religious topics, and with many doubts mingling with the gloom of his refugee-life. We must here again remind the reader that in those days literature, except such as existed among the Egyptians, was extremely scant, and the Egyptian instruction would, of course, be altogether on the side of their false gods. The Israelites had their traditionary knowledge, but even this, in the course of their slavery, must have become fainter every year. There was nothing to revive it; only one dull, heavy, crushing servitude, in which the God of their ancestors seemed to have utterly forsaken them; while on the side of their superiors was idolatry seemingly blessing its followers with abundance and ease. Who was there, or what was there, to enlighten them, during this long slavery in which they were sinking every day into lower and lower abasement, with no time for instruction in their own religion if they had desired it, and no books;—only a sottish, grovelling ignorance deepening constantly among them? As to Moses, he had been debarred in a great degree even from that traditionary knowledge which common suffering would lead his people in some degree to cherish, or which might have some stimulus to its individuality through the taunts of their oppressors. But still, he was not quite ignorant in these important matters of his people's distinctive belief. Something he had picked up by various means,—probably carried to him by his mother's unceasing watchfulness for opportunities; something in con-

nection with such enlightenment, was suggested to him by his own reasonings concerning the Egyptian idolatry; and all was strengthened by his sympathy for his people and indignation against the oppressors. His own intellect was of the most powerful order; and though only catching glimpses of the truth, it was able, by those glimpses, to establish a sufficiency of faith to serve for action. But during those years of study and observation and reasoning, and of shaking himself loose from the shackles of priestly education, and of combatting with himself, when all interest drew him perceptibly to one side and conviction was pointing to the opposite;—those years of despair respecting his countrymen so abject in mind as well as in body;—years of rebellion in his heart against the court and courtiers, his constant associates;—years of contempt for himself because enduring and seemingly encouraging the falsities around him, and of apparent hopelessness in any resistance; and also of knowing certainly that want and slavery, or more likely a felon's death would follow his abjuring what he was learning every day more and more to despise and hate and also to fear;—during all those years what a life his had been in the palace or at On!

He was now away from it; and although feeling himself to be a fugitive, still as he fled on toward the Red Sea, and then beyond it farther into Arabia, his step was more elastic and his eye brighter and his manner more in the true dignity of his manhood, then had been the case for a long time before. Here, at least, he was leading no false life. Here he was independent and could be true to himself and to what he knew, or might know, of God. Around him also was nature in great, majestic forms, often desolate it was true, and in that desolateness akin to his own feelings, but akin also to sentiments of elevation and force that he felt were in himself. Indeed Egypt had, for some time, palled upon him; for there was a monotony and an oppressive character

even in its grandeur, so ruled by law and by the despotic power.—Here all was free!

With such feelings he had sat down, after penetrating some distance into Arabia, to refresh himself by a well, and to rest; and while there, seven women came with their flocks in order to water them,—for the refugee was now among people leading the primitive life of which he had heard as that of his ancestors. The life about him was simple enough;—flocks, the daughters even of the prince or sheikh attending them, tents moving hither and thither, no temples or halls of the Osirides, but great mountains with God's own image impressed upon them:—and freedom everywhere.

Yet even here was violence; for after the women had drawn water and filled the troughs for their flocks, some men came for a similar purpose, and drove them away. The Egyptian (as he seemed to be) sprang to the help of the women. His gloomy thoughts along the way about violence to the weak and helpless left behind made him additionally intolerant of violence here, and the stranger shepherds were made to recoil from his indignation and from the strength that in Egypt had been able to kill an oppressor: he helped the women, and drew more water for their flocks.

They were the daughters of Reuel (or Jethro), a sheikh of the country, a Midianite. The reader will remember that this race of people were the descendants of Abraham by his last wife Keturah. The family had multiplied, and had scattered over the country, doubtless intermarrying with Abraham's descendants through Ishmael, who were also inhabitants of Arabia. Sometimes they spread northwardly east of the Dead Sea, and on occasions engaged in commerce; but the shepherd life was better suited to their habits and inclinations, as it is to the inclinations of their descendants at this day.

When these daughters of the sheikh returned to their father's tents, in answer to the father's inquiries about their coming so early they detailed the events at the well, and the refugee was immediately sent for, and introduced to the hospitalities of this home.

More than that, in due time he obtained there a wife; for Jethro was so pleased with him that he gave him Zipporah, his daughter, as an inducement to stay and to make his residence among the tribe.

He remained there forty years. His wife gave him two sons, of whom the elder was named *Gershom*, "Expulsion," (from *Garash*, to *drive out*), and the other *Eliezer*, meaning "God is my helper:" and thus, in the cares and enjoyments of domestic life and the service of his father-in-law as keeper of his flocks, time passed tranquilly away to him, through successive years, amid those mountains and valleys, the open wastes and fertile spots around the fountains in Arabia.

The country where he was now is usually called "The Peninsula of Sinai,"[1] not a correct term, for it is a triangle, the full northern side of which is joined to the desert region lying between Palestine and Egypt. A distinct name, however, is needed for this remarkable region, and this will answer very well if it is thus understood. The country spoken of lies between the two northern arms of the Red Sea,—the Gulf of Suez and the Gulf of Akabah—and has at the southern end of this triangle a collection of granite mountains, not arranged in any regularity of form, but each one distinct, with deep and mostly narrow valleys between their bare, black, precipitous sides; both mountain and valley now offering but rarely a speck of verdure to the eye. All is bleak and desolate, but the necessities of the present inhabitants lead them to cut down the trees for making char-

[1] The reader will do well to refer to the map on page, 316.

coal, almost the only thing they can procure for sale or barter; and it is probable that, in the time of Moses, there was more verdure than at the present. But it must always have been a bleak, desolate and solitary region, quite apart from the rest of the world. Just north of this granitic portion, which is a triangle of about seventy miles on each side, is a more open belt of sandstone country, twenty-four miles wide; and beyond this northwardly is limestone underlying, or else forming bare hills, in the great desert region extending on to Beersheba. But all these geological formations are now generally bare and barren alike. One spot must be excepted, and this one is so beautiful that, on account both of its own loveliness and of the contrast which it offers to the rest, it is called "the gem of the desert." It is in a valley called the Wady Feiran, lying at the north-western edge of the granite region; and there, quite exceptionally to all else, is a stream of pure water, with trees overhanging it, and turf by its side, and some cultivation, where the Arabs raise grain, melons and figs. The whole place seems to have been considered a sacred one from the earliest times; for by the stream are remains of ancient churches, and in the adjoining bluffs have been excavated cells for anchorites,—the spaces scarcely large enough to contain a human body; and all this region, even to the highest summits of the adjacent Mount Serbal, is sprinkled thickly over with singular inscriptions, which for a long time baffled every effort to decipher them. They are in letters rude, but evidently having a meaning, and in an unknown language: sometimes, however, Greek characters are intermingled, and a few have the Christian emblem of the cross; but these latter and the Greek are thought to be more modern than the others. For some time the earlier inscriptions were attributed to the Hebrews in their forty years' journeyings; but Professor Beer, of Leipsic, who has lately succeeded in deciphering them, makes them out to be by the

Nabatheans of Petra and its neighborhood, of whom they are the only existing traces. He supposes them to have been made by pilgrims; but Lepsius thinks that they were made by a Christian pastoral people. They are supposed to belong to the century preceding and that following the Christian era. This spot is very abundant in them, while they diminish in number as we recede from it.

The neighboring Mount Serbal, three miles distant from Feiran, and reached by a branch wady, is one of the highest mountains in the peninsula; and standing quite disconnected from the others, is the most imposing of all. It has an elevation of six thousand three hundred and forty-two French feet, with both summit and sides extremely rugged, the former compared by Dr. Olin to a series of stalactites turned lower end upward. The Arabs still climb its peaks, in order to offer sacrifices there on extraordinary occasions; and the sanctity still attached by them to this mountain, as well as the marks of great regard in ancient times, and the beauty of the neighboring "gem of the desert," together with its great convenience for a stopping-place for the Israelites, have made Lepsius and others consider this as the genuine Mount Sinai; a subject which will be discussed in another part of this work. The whole of this region will require from us a more minute attention when we come to the journey of the Israelites through it and the delivery in it of the Law; but it is desirable to have some acquaintance now with the country in which Moses was to spend so many years, and where, in order to be prepared to do so much good thereafter to others, he had first to do a great work *within himself.*

We must never forget "the human element" in the inspired men of ancient times, even in those most favored of the Almighty. God did not take for his agents men of wooden formations in intellect or feelings, and contented to be of that character; but men who, though belonging to our

humanity, were trying to learn to do for Him. Our Saviour gave the true philosophy of God as helper when he said, If any man will *do* his will he shall *know*.[1]

Moses was here, now, to undergo a long process of mental discipline, before he could be prepared for the immense work to which he was to be called. Inspiration would come, but not to a man benighted and making no effort for light; not to one sinking down in a stupor of idleness, but to one rousing himself up to the highest kind of thinking and praying, and hoping and loving,—all connected with God.

There was, in the first place, very much for Moses *to unlearn* with respect to himself, as well as much to learn. He was only a man; he had been brought up in Egyptian temples, with Egyptian training, where to the bias exercised on his youthful mind by the kindness and love of his foster-mother, had been added the enchantments of architectural grandeur and the influence on a growing intellect by the grave, majestic Osirides, and the old legends respecting their gods. All this had entered deeply into his soul, and could now be thoroughly shaken off or corrected, not by a single effort, but only by long struggles with himself and with error, and by earnest clingings, as for his life, to truths as they came out of chaos and became evident to his mind and heart. He was to be self-trained by the severest mental and moral discipline—God all the while assisting him—before he could be fitted to train others, in mind and heart.[2]

These savage-looking mountains in their sternness and solitudes were favorable for such searchings after truth and struggles with self. No temples here except of God's own forming; no images, yet God everywhere; no corruptions to the heart in this entire simplicity of life and in these calm

[1] John vii. 17.

[2] We see a striking exhibition of similar struggles long afterward in Luther.

and simple employments. The Midianitish tribe coming from Abraham had retained in their pastoral life a knowledge of God handed down from that patriarch, better than had been done by Jacob's descendants among the strange mixtures and degrading servitude in Egypt; and Jethro was now able[1] to aid even this student so endowed with large capacities, in these present efforts to reach higher truths.

A long time he had in these solitudes; and a long time was required;—much self-searching, much prejudice to be shaken off, much obstinacy of error to be overcome, much purity of soul to be obtained, in order to fit it for the truth; and we may believe, also, much prayer and earnestness with God for help. For he surely needed help. He, this man, with all our human feelings clinging to him, was to rise from that overwhelming rubbish of Egyptian mythology, evermore crumbling back upon his mind as he tried to work upward toward the light; and was to get up, at last, to where he could see God in singleness of heart and truth of soul, and to know Jehovah as he is. What was to assist him in all this? Books? There were few or none. Reason? Alone, it must fail. Whence have help? Only from God; and God would help only as he would try to help himself with struggles and in prayer.

Eusebius and other eminent critics suppose that during this time he wrote the book of Genesis, but others assert that the inspiration necessary for it did not come to him till after the delivery of the Law in Sinai. Whatever may have been the time of such composition, it is certain that the style of his writings is the best and purest in the Hebrew Scriptures, and shows a very highly cultivated taste. Hebrew scholars consider the Pentateuch as constituting the golden age of their literature.

We leave him now in this retirement, while we go back and look once more at Egypt and the Pharaohs.

[1] Inferred from incidents in Ex. xviii.

CHAPTER XXIX.

WHO AND WHAT WAS THE PHARAOH OF THE EXODUS?

WE left Ramesses II. on the throne of Egypt; but when Moses had been thirty-four years in Arabia, death put an end to the reign of this Pharaoh, so glorious in foreign conquests and in embellishments of his country, but so terribly exacting to every one under his rule. To the Israelites,—used as slaves,—his government had been a crushing weight.

When he died, every one in Egypt breathed more freely and hoped for a relief from burdens. We turn now to look at his son and successor Menephthah,—and to inquire concerning him; for this monarch seems to be clearly shown by the monuments and by history to be the Pharaoh of the Exodus. We may well take an interest in studying his characteristics, for they were peculiar, and they may very readily have helped to shape those strange events blended with the deliverance of the Israelites. In connection with this subject comes up also an interesting question, Do the Egyptian monuments afford us anything in illustration of the Exodus? With reference to this subject we can scarcely expect much; for these monuments were for the glorification of the country or kings; and this is an event of quite the reverse character; but we may perhaps learn something, if not from what they say, then from their silence.

We have seen how these monuments were accumulated in the time of Ramesses II.; and also how, through the previous reigns, similar architectural structures were erected by the successive sovereigns as ornaments of Egypt and as records of their own great renown. Their tombs also,

which we have not had time to notice, were nearly as wonderful, being great subterranean excavations of halls and passages, in the highest style of embellishment and of glorification of the sovereign.

We come to Menephthah's reign, and *then there is a remarkable change*,—a gap looking not quite as if such a sovereign had never existed, but as if, having commenced his reign, he had presently come to a sudden and disastrous end.

The Exodus is supposed by both Lepsius and Bunsen to have occurred in this reign; the latter dating it in the sixth year: and they inform us that the only year of this Pharaoh mentioned on the monuments is the second, and that strictly speaking no historical monument by him exists at all. There is a column (stele) at Silsilis, cut in the rock; but it was one of his sons who dedicated it. The third of the small rock temples there met with (dedicated to Hathor, the Egyptian Venus) it is true was constructed by Menephthah, but this was in the first year of his reign. The subjects of the inscription on it are merely religious. There is no allusion to exploit, no term conveying the idea either of glory or of prowess. An inscription at Silsilis alludes to a building being commenced, for which a quarry was opened, where his second regal year is mentioned. In all the rest of Egypt there is no trace of him except his escutcheon (*cartouche*), which was placed on the buildings of his father at Thebes, and then his tomb at Niban el Moluk. But even this tomb was not finished by either him or his son.[1]

"It is true," as Bunsen remarks, "that this is merely a negative proof." But, to quote further from his book, "It must, however, be admitted that if in this countless mass of buildings, sculptures and other monuments which extend down to the sixty-second year of Ramses, a sudden gap is

[1] These notices of the monuments are mostly compiled from Bunsen, his language being also frequently used.

found, such silence would be eloquent testimony in behalf of some great calamity.

"Now such is precisely the case. The only year of Menephthah mentioned on the monuments is his second;" and then this writer goes on to speak of Rossellini's admission above, that there is no historical monument by this king.

In the history of Egypt by the Egyptian priest, Manetho, already noticed in this work, we have a much more explicit account of this sovereign. It is quoted literally in the writings of Josephus; and for reasons which we have already given, the truthfulness of Josephus in the extracts can scarcely be doubted. Manetho, after noticing that Amenophis (Menephthah) desired to see the gods as Orus (Horus) one of his predecessors had done, says that he communicated his desire to a friend who "seemed to partake of the divine nature, both as to wisdom and knowledge of futurities." He was informed by the latter that he might succeed in getting sight of them, if "he would clear the whole country of the lepers and of the other impure people," and that he sent them to the quarries on the eastern side of the Nile. Afterward, however, he set apart for them the city Avaris; and we will now quote from Manetho, through Josephus: "But when these men were gotten into it, and found the place fit for a revolt, they appointed themselves a ruler out of the priests of Heliopolis, whose name was Osarsiph, and they took their oaths that they would be obedient to him in all things. He then, in the first place, made this law for them: That they should neither worship the Egyptian gods, nor should abstain from any one of those sacred animals which they have in the highest esteem, but kill and destroy them all; that they should join themselves to nobody but to those that were of their confederacy." Manetho proceeds to say that they fortified themselves at Avaris, and "got other priests and those that

were polluted with them," and also induced some of the shepherd-race formerly sent from the country now to come back, and join their confederacy: that Amenophis (Menephthah) "was in great confusion," and "assembled the multitude of the Egyptians" and took counsel, and had the sacred animals and images of the gods made secure and his son sent to a safe place; after which he marched "with the rest of the Egyptians, being 300,000 of the most warlike of them, against the enemy. Yet did he not join battle with them; but thinking that would be to fight against the gods, he returned back and came to Memphis, where he took Apis and the other sacred animals which he had sent to him, and presently marched into Ethiopia, together with his whole army and multitude of the Egyptians." He adds that the descendants of the Hyksos having joined the confederacy at Avaris, the two ravaged the country and committed many excesses and cruelties upon the inhabitants, and then says, "It was also reported that the priest who ordained their polity and laws was by birth of Heliopolis; and his name Osarsiph from Osiris, who was the god of Heliopolis; but that when he was gone over to these people his name was changed, *and he was called Moses.*"[1]

There seems to be scarcely room for doubt that we have, in this Egyptian account, such a version as their priests, from whom Manetho drew his history, would give of the Exodus recorded in our Bible; the facts being accommodated by them to the prejudices of that country.

The testimony of Strabo, although having no particular reference to Menephthah, may properly be introduced at this place. Strabo travelled extensively in Egypt, and doubtless had much intercourse with the Egyptian priests. He says, "Moses, an Egyptian priest, who possessed a considerable tract of Lower Egypt, unable longer to bear with

[1] Con. Ap. i. § 26.

what existed there, departed thence to Syria, and with him went out many who honored the Divine Being (τὸ θεῖον). For Moses maintained and taught that the Egyptians were not right in likening the nature of God to beasts and cattle, nor yet the Africans, nor even the Greeks, in fashioning their gods in the form of men. He held that this only was God, that which encompasses all of us, earth and sea, that which we call heaven, and the order of the world and the nature of things. Of these, who that had any sense would venture to invent an image like anything which exists among ourselves? Far better to abandon all images and sculpture, all setting apart of sacred precincts and shrines, and to pay reverence without any image whatever. The course prescribed was, that those who have the gift of good divinations for themselves and others should compose themselves to sleep within a temple; and those who live temperately and justly may expect to receive some good gift from God, those always and none besides." Strabo, who lived about the beginning of our era, is supposed to have taken this account from Hecatæus (549 B. C.), which is given with further and less accurate details in Diodorus, xi.

From these materials, furnished by the monuments and the history by Egyptians, we seem then to have reason fully to conclude;—that Menephthah, son and successor of the despotic Ramesses II., was the Pharaoh of the Exodus;—that the new sovereign was a very superstitious man, and perhaps with moral characteristics such as may be inferred from the fact that the only temple he commenced was to the Egyptian Venus; and that he was weak in mind and vacillating in purpose: and we are struck by the fact, that if our chronology be correct, Horus, who first began to persecute the Israelites, and Menephthah, in whose reign they were quite delivered, were by their extreme idolatrous superstitions affiliated, at the beginning and the end, each

of them having a vain ambition to be a spectator of their gods.

Such appears to have been the Pharaoh before whom Moses was now about to appear with the demand from Jehovah to let his people go free.

CHAPTER XXX.

THE MISSION TO DELIVER.

FROM the city of Thebes, five and a quarter miles by three in extent, or Memphis, estimated to be yet larger; and from what in the former may be called a city of magnificent temples, or from the hives of beings in the latter, where now the traveller walks over miles of disinterred mummy remains;—from either was a long stride in human life to the rugged mountains and the solitudes of the deserts of Arabia; and such a transit there had been in the life of Moses.

In the region of such strong contrasts to the place of his bringing up, and in employments quite as strongly in contrast to his former occupations, he had now spent forty years. But it was a time of great opportunity for him. He could learn here, and he was learning. He was learning about himself: what was far better, he was learning about God. Where could there have been a better place for him to shake off the superstitions of his Egyptian priestly education; to break mental shackles; to unlearn a vast deal as well as to learn; to try to see God with clear and bright mental vision, and to draw near to him in faith? This simple employment of the nomads did not pall upon him, who in his mental life had such variety of resources, and so

much in his soul-life to do. His complete intellectual training in Egypt, and his vast stores of knowledge there accumulated, came to his assistance; and now, when he had been chastened by trials and was here in the pure moral air of the shepherd race among these mountains, both came in to make him what he afterward showed himself to be, a strong thinker, and strong doer, in the right.

We can see him in his family, acted upon by the genial influences of wife and children; we can see him in the deep glens, or on the mountain sides or tops, feeling that he was alone with God, and finding the companionship ennobling to every faculty of his soul; and then we can see him in the tribe-gatherings at the tents, listening to traditions handed down from of old,—such historic streams there kept clear, because unmingled with grosser things or with multitudinous complicated events. The Kenite tribe, and the Ishmaelites, and occasional visitors from Edom,—all simple nomads from Abraham's time down,—all of them descendants from him,—would have these traditions from their forefathers most carefully preserved, and would cherish them with that pride of genealogy which we still see in the Arab race.

And we may well believe also that, here at the tents were often heard the *bardic* strains, as the Kenites sat in the evening in the light of the wonderfully bright moon of that region, or as the fire flashed upon eyes equally flashing and upon features indicating that the listeners were wrought up into a frenzy of excitement.

We may ask, did Moses himself compose and chant at this place the sublime poetry of the book of Job? for the poetry and the subject were both worthy of him and his remarkable abilities; and the subjects of the poem are believed by commentators to have been drawn from Idumea, a country adjoining the peninsula of Sinai on the north. Numerous modern critics, the erudite Jahn among them, unite with the ancient Talmudists and many of the Greek

and Syrian Fathers in the belief that the Book of Job was written by Moses: and if so, it was doubtless at this period: for the total silence in it respecting the Exodus shows that it was composed previous to that event. It has all the indications of a very early origin; and the customs hinted at in narrating its incidents are just such as prevailed among the Arabs of that region where Moses was living.

Forty years in this nomadic occupation had brought him to the intellectually well-matured age of eighty; his body strong and wiry as we always see among the nomads; his heart in full harmony with the grandeur of God's works all around him.—Then came to his life a quick and wonderful change!

In feeding his flocks, he had, on one occasion, got near to Mount Horeb in this peninsula: and there suddenly appeared before him a most astonishing sight;—a bush on fire and yet not in the least consumed! A form, as of an angel, appeared in the midst of the flame; and as Moses came near, he heard a voice, warning him to take off his sandals, "for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."[1] God himself was speaking now—

"I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob;" and then, as the awe-struck man hid his face and bowed, afraid to gaze longer, the words continued,—

"I have surely seen the affliction of my people which are in Egypt, and have heard their cry by reason of their taskmasters; for I know their sorrows;" and then announced that the time for their deliverance and for their restoration to Canaan had come; with the conclusion, "Come now, therefore, and I will send thee unto Pharaoh, that thou

[1] Fire among the Eastern nations was considered to be an emblem of the Deity. All people there perform their worship barefooted. The ancient Greeks did the same, and one of the maxims of Pythagoras was said to be, "Offer sacrifices and worship with your shoes off."

mayest bring forth my people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt."

The amazed and frightened man drew back: the command was astounding!

"Who am I," he said, "that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?"—The reply was—

"Certainly I will be with thee," with the assurance that at this very mountain those people should serve God. But Moses saw only confusion and doubts and difficulties in the minds of those debased, ignorant people, in whom the very idea of God had become dim.

"Behold," he said, "when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is his name? what shall I say unto them?" The answer was,

"I AM THAT I AM. Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, 'I AM hath sent me unto you.'"

He was charged to say to them, moreover, that the God of their fathers had sent him; and to gather the elders of their people together and deliver a set message to them, with a promise from God of deliverance. Then he was to take the elders before the king and say to him,

"The Lord God of the Hebrews hath met with us; and now let us go (we beseech thee), three days' journey into the wilderness, that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God."

The same voice added that the king of Egypt would resist; but after certain demonstrations before him, of God's power, would yield and let them go. They were also, in consideration of their long, unpaid servitude, to spoil the Egyptians at their departure.

But Moses saw insuperable difficulties in his way. What proof could he give them that his commission was from God? He was a man like themselves, and he would be demanding of them the widest stretch of faith; they would not be-

lieve, or even listen; they would treat him as an impostor. There was reason in the objections as he urged them now. Then, demonstrations open to his own senses were made. He was bid to cast the "rod" (probably his shepherd's staff) in his hand on the ground. He did so: it became a serpent, and he fled before it. He was recalled and bid to seize it; and on his doing so, it became again a rod. He was bid to put his hand into his bosom. He did so, and on taking it out, saw it all covered with the white scabs of leprosy, "leprous as snow." Again, on being bid, he put it into his bosom, and on withdrawing it saw that it was healed, and was as it had previously been. These were proofs to him that a supernatural power was to be joined with him in this message, which was indeed in itself so utterly desperate; and he was told that signs of convincing power would be manifested by himself before this people.

But he was still overwhelmed by thoughts of this strange, wonderful commission, requiring so much from himself and from others:—from him, only a man, and not gifted, as he thought, with the necessary qualifications. In himself he felt no added endowments, even in this present Divine companionship. Doubt and distress and terror still had their hold upon him.

"O my Lord," he said, "I am not eloquent, neither heretofore nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue." The answer was—

"Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I, the Lord? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say."

Surely it was sufficient; and we are struck with God's forbearance, amid these long resistances, and with the patient reasoning. But now patience had its end; and God, letting the man's claim of weakness prevail, and with no

further promise to counteract it, directed him to Aaron his brother, who was eloquent; and who, he was told, was coming to meet him and would rejoice at the meeting. The next words from the Deity were in mandatory tones:

"And thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth; and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do. And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people; and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth and thou shalt be to him instead of God. And thou shalt take this rod in thine hand, wherewith thou shalt do signs."

There was no further resistance, for every plea was taken away from him. The mighty work before him, so overwhelming in its nature, so full of dangers and toils, was made imperative. God had spoken clearly; he had to submit. Yet, as he took his way back now to his father-in-law's house, it was with convulsions of nature within him as if the very foundations of his being were becoming upturned. He was indeed becoming another man; he, lately the calm recluse among the mountains, the quiet student, the simple tender of sheep! His was a great soul, but it had been content with the ideal and with quietude. He had been suddenly shaken and waked up. He was now to rise up, to abandon for ever all thoughts of retirement and of rest; and to gird all his energies to scenes and troubles where every one of his faculties would be tried to the utmost. He trembled at the immensity of the work before him, who had never been a practical man, mingling with the busy world, and was now to be thrust forward as a leader to a nation, which was to be lifted by his arm as an instrument, out of thraldom into freedom. He trembled and shrank; but, as he walked along now toward Jethro's tent, he felt that there was a Presence with him, such as had never been so strikingly in companionship with him before. He trod therefore firmly, though humbly, as he went.

He asked permission at the tent to be allowed to visit his brethren in Egypt, and his father-in-law gave it with his blessing; "Go in peace." So taking his wife and children, and an ass to convey them, he set out on his journey. Afterward, however, he sent them back to her father's tent: they could be only an impediment, and might meet with danger. Indeed, on the way there was a scene only half-explained in the Bible record, which caused the performance on them of the Hebrew rite, which had hitherto been neglected.

Aaron, forewarned by the Deity as had been promised, had come to meet him; and they met among these desert solitudes, "in the mount of God;"—an agitating meeting, one of them so full of great and wonderful purposes laid imperatively upon him, and the other wondering at the meaning of the mysteriously given summons to go forth. They communed together; and then both proceeded to their work.

Their work! They could have no hope in it, except what came from God. But as they walked along over the Arabian wastes toward the head of the Red Sea gulf, and then around it, toward Egypt, they felt always that strange Presence; for God had spoken, and they knew that he was with them.

Having reached Goshen, they assembled the elders of their countrymen together, as soon as they could. Aaron, the eloquent spokesman, communicated to them what had occurred to his brother, and what was the great commission given; and then the two brothers gave outward demonstrations in "signs,"—doubtless miraculous acts—before the people. The people believed; and when they heard that the Lord had visited the children of Israel, and that he had looked upon their affliction, they bowed their heads and worshipped.

The next transaction of the two brothers was to be with the king himself.

CHAPTER XXXI.

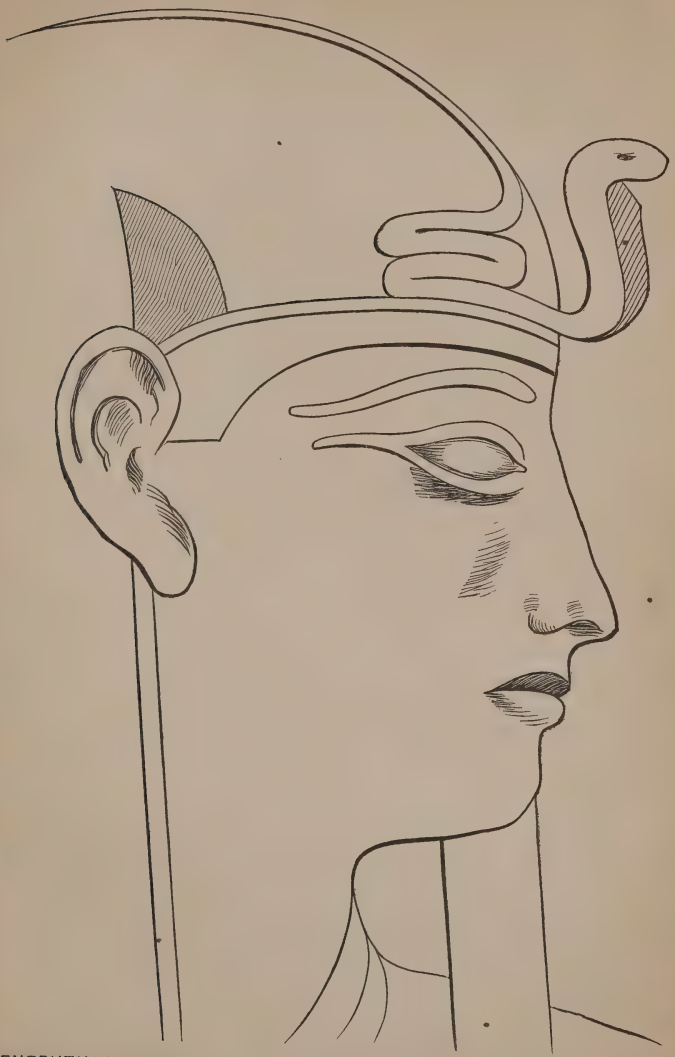
THE DEMAND FOR FREEDOM MADE.

WE present here the picture of Menephthah, taken carefully from the great work of Lepsius; and the reader will be struck with the expression of face, so similar to what we might have imagined in one who, as shown on the Egyptian monuments and history, was vacillating, superstitious and weak. We notice also the singular prominence on this head of the Uræus or asp, the representative of their god Neph, and the emblem of royalty.

But, however wanting in real greatness his true characteristics may have been, he was still the Pharaoh, obeyed implicitly, as if a god himself; was absolute and powerful; and his very weakness of character made him more jealous respecting honors due to his rank, and more anxious to establish a reputation for force. He was even more dangerous to a supposed enemy from the want of that quietude which conscious firmness and strength impart.

Thus we see him in the great palace of the Pharaohs.

It was with feelings very far different from any that he had ever before had in those royal halls, that Moses, accompanied by Aaron, now came and presented himself before the monarch. He stood erect now and strong, in the dignity of a man, and in the felt especial presence of God. On other occasions it had been Moses, a dependant, although the adopted prince of the household, submitting to be a participant in that immense system of Egyptian superstitious worship, and probably officiating as priest; having very many queryings, we may believe, starting up in his mind and growing stronger every day, respecting the truth of their system; but yet held down by the ties from education, his mind still blinded, and the struggle within him for light often feeble and ob-



MENEPHTHAH (Mari-en-ptheh, Ba-en-Ra), Thought to be the Pharaoh of the Exodus,
(Copied by careful tracing from Lepsius' work.)

structed. He had walked these halls of the palace, with a great struggle in his heart also, respecting his countrymen; intensely indignant at the cruelties exercised upon them by their masters,—his associates, and yet repelled by the grossness and ignorance among themselves; mourning over their degradation, and yet not seeing how they could be raised. In their very religion there was a counterpoise to any hopes in his mind or to any efforts; for their notions of the Divinity which they acknowledged, were dark, and were inoperative upon them; and while they rejected the refined and intellectual system of symbols in use among the Egyptians, they had scarcely anything definite to offer in its stead.

Therefore it was as a man puzzled with doubts, in conflict with himself, bowed down, and despising his own position of subserviency to what his heart condemned, that he had before trod these royal halls among the royal princes and the priests.

Now it was all far different. He came with a raised-up head, a mind clear from mists, a heart strong in its faith in God, and with a mien and step such as would be learned among the sheikhs and the free wanderers in the desert. Above all, he felt that he stood before Pharaoh as a commissioner from Jehovah, and that God was with him there. He and Aaron spake with authority:

"Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, Let my people go, that they may hold a feast unto me in the wilderness."

"Who is the Lord that I should obey his voice to let Israel go?" demanded the indignant monarch; "I know not the Lord, neither will I let Israel go." They answered,

"The God of the Hebrews hath met with us: let us go, we pray thee, three days' journey into the desert, and sacrifice unto the Lord our God;[1] lest he fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword."

[1] Their plea for that distance had the excuse that some of the animals to be sacrificed by the Hebrews were considered as gods by the Egyptians.

The monarch had heard of them before, and of thei assembling the elders, and the sensation which they had created among their people: his passion rose:

"Wherefore do ye, Moses and Aaron, let [hinder] the people from their works? get you unto your burdens."

He added,—as if a rough calculation of losses by this interruption in their work was passing through his mind: "Behold, the people of the land now are many, and ye make them to rest from their burdens."

On the same day he issued orders to all officers superintending the servitude of the Israelites, and to the inferior taskmasters, to do that which must have made the slavery doubly severe and cruel. The edifices in that country were, and are still, made of sun-dried bricks, with cut straw intermixed to hold the earth together, even the body of their great halls being so constructed, and then faced with sculptured stones; and now a mandate was issued that straw should no longer be issued to the workmen, but that they must search for it themselves;—the same amount of bricks still being rigidly required. The Egyptian people could withhold the material, and now immediately ensued a scene of confusion and terror and aggravated suffering among the Israelites throughout the land: for the taskmasters, as we may still see on the monuments, plied the lash on the naked backs of the workmen. The Hebrew supervisors whom the taskmasters had set over their countrymen were themselves also beaten; and soon a universal cry of distress and pain went up over all the country. When remonstrance was carried by the Jewish elders to Pharaoh, he met it with a taunting charge of idleness; to indulge which, he said, they were desirous of going into the wilderness for the purpose of sacrificing. They were ordered out to their work, which was not to be diminished, but to be everywhere exacted. On their way they met Moses and Aaron, and cried out to them—

"The Lord look upon you and judge; because ye have made our savor to be abhorred in the eyes of Pharaoh, and in the eyes of his servants, to put a sword into their hands to slay us."

"Was this the deliverance!"—Moses might well think:—for he seemed to be deserted of God, and men were all against him; the Hebrew elders were upbraiding him; all over the country was but aggravated distress, a cry of anguish from men, women and children; he felt that he was hated and despised by all. Even Aaron seems to have shrunk back from his distressed brother, who appears to have gone alone before God. It was a bitter cry that came from him;—

"Lord, wherefore hast thou so evil-entreated this people? why is it that thou hast sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in thy name, he hath done evil to this people; neither hast thou delivered thy people at all."

The reply to him from Jehovah was—

"Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh: for with a strong hand shall he let them go, and with a strong hand shall he drive them out of his land;" and then he was reminded of the covenant which God had made with his forefathers, and was directed to go again to the Jewish elders, with fresh assurances that this covenant would be faithfully carried into effect.

He went to them, but they were not in a spirit to receive the message: they had no room for trust; for their hearts were full of one bitter feeling; the lash was sounding in their ears; the cry from mental anguish and bodily pain drowned all other sounds. They would not listen to him.

Moses bowed his head in humiliation, and shame and chagrin; and again God's voice was heard by him,

"Go in, speak unto Pharaoh, king of Egypt, that he let the children of Egypt go out of his land." The discouraged man replied—

"Behold, the children of Israel have not hearkened unto

me; how then shall Pharaoh hear me, who am of uncircumcised lips?"

In these troubles we have not heard of Aaron, and Moses seems to have distrusted all things,—his people, his brother, almost his God, with his promises and covenants. His heart was utterly crushed.

Yet still he was kept to duty. He was told now to take Aaron with him, and directed, "Thou shalt speak all that I command thee;" told to go before Pharaoh and request him, "That he send the children of Israel out of his land;" and was informed that the monarch would not listen to him to any practical purpose, until God should lay his hand in judgment upon Egypt, and bring out Israel with a powerful hand.

Moses and Aaron went. They had been previously directed by the Deity how to act, in case the monarch should demand of them a miracle or sign of their commission, which he might be expected to do. Who were they? What proof could they offer of their high claims for divine appointment? Why should he listen at all to them—these men of the abject race? What sign could they show?

We know that Egypt was a country of great superstitions; and we have seen that this present monarch was probably remarkable even there for such traits; and the proofs for the divine commission given to these two men were adapted to such a character. These were to be cumulative; appealing one after another to his senses of sight and feeling, and to his humanity toward his own subjects, if he had none for the enslaved: and if he resisted, then the climax was to be a distressing visitation penetrating the recesses of the royal household itself.

We look now into these lordly halls; with the massive and richly sculptured columns around; with the images of gods looking down on the scenes beneath; with the stories of ancestral battles and triumphs cut in stone and speaking

to the eye on every side; and with the gorgeousness of rich hangings and adornments in silver and gold and gems. We see also sitting there, the monarch absolute in physical power though mentally weak; and around him, the standing courtiers; and then, in front of him, in the open area by the throne, these two men of the abject, despised race, one with a rod in his hand, come once more to deliver their request that he would let their people go.

He demanded a miracle. Aaron, according to the previous admonition to Moses, took the rod and cast it down before the king. It became a serpent. The monarch believing that they were only necromancers in a country famous then, as it is now, for its skill in such deeds, sent for his "wise men and the sorcerers," who at his command "cast down every man his rod, and they became serpents: but Aaron's rod swallowed up their rods." The only effect on the king was to make him more settled and firm in his purpose than before.

Another effort at moving him was made.

Moses and his brother were directed to meet the monarch on his visit to the river in the morning; and standing on its brink, to declare again their commission to him, and as a proof of it, to stretch the rod over the waters of Egypt in all directions, changing them by this act into blood. It was done, and the river ran blood; the water in vessels in their houses was changed to blood; the fish died; the river became offensive to the smell. Their great stream seemed suddenly to have become their enemy, to have changed so as to be an offence and a disgusting sight to all the people. But "the magicians of Egypt did so with their enchantments," changing in a similar manner the water drawn from wells. The king was still not convinced. The distress in the country, however, was universal: for seven days the inhabitants had to dig wells in order to supply themselves with water for domestic use.

Another trial was now made for the same purpose, after another refusal of the monarch to let the people go. He had been warned of the result of his refusal; and on his persisting, the rod was stretched over the land, and frogs came up from the river and spread over the country,—into the houses, and bed-chambers, and ovens, and kneading-troughs. The magicians on being summoned brought similar animals from the river; but the general nuisance had become so grievous and was so disgusting, that the king became earnest to have it removed. He sent for Moses and Aaron and solicited them to that effect;—the first symptom of any salutary effect on the sovereign's mind. They asked him to appoint[1] a time for their prayers to that effect: he did so, and at the hour specified, the living cause was removed, though the effect remained; for the frogs perishing corrupted the atmosphere.

Still the monarch refused; and another demonstration was made. Aaron stretched out his hand, and "all the dust of the land became lice throughout all the land of Egypt." Pharaoh, however, was still unmoved, although the magicians acknowledged that their imitative power was now at an end.

Still another trial was made, after another appeal "to let the people go;" and this was by bringing flies over all the country, filling the houses, and swarming upon the ground, till "the land was corrupted by reason of the swarm of flies." It had been previously declared that the lands of Goshen should be excepted from this visitation, which was accordingly found to be true.

Pharaoh now sent for the two brothers and told them that he would allow the Israelites to offer sacrifices in Egypt itself; but this proposal was rejected on the plea that

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[1] In our translation, "Glory over me:" the ancient translators, more agreeably to the context, had it, "command," or "appoint to me."

offence would be taken by the Egyptians on seeing what the sacrifice was. He then said that they might go a little way into the wilderness for the purpose; and begged them to entreat God to remove the plague. They consented to make such entreaty, but with a caution to him against dealing with them deceitfully. The plague ceased at their prayer.

It is a law of our nature that the heart of man grows either better or worse from every trial which it endures, stronger always either for good purposes or for bad. This law was operating on Pharaoh's heart. To the simple refusal at first, he was now adding prevarication and deceit. The plague had been removed, but he still refused.

But a more terrible visitation came now, that of murrain upon all Egyptian cattle and sheep, horses, asses and camels, which were out in the field.[1] The monarch had been forewarned by Moses that such would be the case if he should persist in his refusal, and that the Israelites should be exempted from the evil. Murrain is not unknown in that country even in our times;[2] but this was a thorough extermination of all Egyptian animals left in the fields: Pharaoh, on sending to the residences of the Israelites and discovering that they had entirely escaped, must have felt that the visitation was a peculiar one. Still he was obstinate: it was a part of his obtuse nature to be so, and he was doubtless encouraged in his pertinacity by the magicians and priests.

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[1] Wilkinson says, "The custom of feeding some of their herds in sheds [in the rising of the river] accords with the Scripture account of the preservation of the cattle which had been brought home from the field, and explains the apparent contradiction of the destruction of *all* the cattle of Egypt by the murrain and the subsequent death of the cattle by the hail, those which were in the field alone having suffered from the previous plague and those in the stalls or houses having been preserved." *Second Series of Manners and Customs of the Ancient Egyptians.*

[2] During Lepsius' visit in 1842, 40,000 cattle perished in Egypt by murrain.

But a plague now came which reached even them. God commanded Moses and Aaron to take ashes of the furnace and to sprinkle these in the air before Pharaoh; and on their doing so, the fine particles spread as dust over all the land, and where it settled, became "a boil breaking forth with blains upon man and upon beast," throughout the country. No one escaped.

Still no yielding on the part of the monarch; and after a message from God to him, declaring, "I will at this time send all my plagues upon thine heart, and upon thy servants and upon thy people: that thou mayest know that there is none like me in all the earth," a plague of hail was threatened, destructive to all cattle and to every man it would find in the field.

It came on the morrow,—thunder and hail and fire also mingling with it, destroying every herb and shattering the trees and smiting man and beast.[1] The district of Goshen alone was spared. It was such a fury of the elements that all hearts quailed before it; and the monarch sent hastily for the two brothers. He cried to them,

"I have sinned this time: the Lord is righteous, and I and my people are wicked. Entreat the Lord (for it is enough) that there may be no more mighty thunderings and hail: and I will let you go and ye shall stay no longer."

They did so on their going out of the city, and the storm ceased; but with its ceasing the fright of the monarch also ceased, and his heart, and those of the men around him, returned to their former obstinacy and perverseness.

[1] Lepsius witnessed visitations in this country by both hail and locusts. The first was a rain and hail storm at Ghizeh. "Suddenly the storm of wind became a regular hurricane, such as I had never experienced in Europe, and a hail storm came down on us which almost turned day into night." "Then," he adds, "came the locusts, whose young fry have now [May 31st, 1842] increased like sand upon the seashore, and are again devouring the green fields and trees, which, combined with the cattle disease, is, indeed, sufficient to cause a famine."

Then "the Lord said unto Moses, go in unto Pharaoh: for I have hardened his heart, and the heart of his servants; that I might show these my signs before him: and that thou mayest tell in the ears of thy son and of thy son's son what things I have wrought in Egypt, and my signs which I have done among them; that ye may know how that I am the Lord."

He went and threatened, that if the monarch should still be obstinate, then on the morrow a plague of locusts would come upon them, which should eat up every green thing that had been spared, and fill all houses, even the palace;—such a visitation as "neither thy fathers, nor thy fathers' fathers have seen since the day that they were upon the earth unto this day." He turned then and left the royal presence. The people around the monarch were appalled. Their cattle dead; many of their people killed by the hail; their crops above ground destroyed; and now locusts to come, in such numbers as would leave no green thing behind.[1] Starvation was threatening; what was to be the end? They were worn out by this succession of plagues; their case was desperate. At last they spoke out to the king,

"How long shall this man be a snare unto us? Let the men go that they may serve the Lord their God: knowest thou not yet that Egypt is destroyed?"

Moses and Aaron were sent for; and he said, "Go and serve the Lord your God: but who are they that shall go?" The answer was that all must go, old and young, and with flocks and herds: "for we must hold a feast unto the Lord." The monarch was enraged:

"Let the Lord be so with you," he cried, "as I will let

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[1] Baron de Tott says of locusts in Asia: "Their approach darkens the horizon, and so enormous is their multitude, it hides the light of the sun. They light on the fields and there form a bed six or seven inches thick."

Dr. Shaw wrote of them in Barbary, "They entered into our very houses and bed-chambers like so many thieves."

you go and your little ones: look to it; for evil is before you."

He offered to let the men of the Israelite nation go to the feast; but women and children, who would be pledges for the return of the men, were to remain. The offer was refused; and then Moses and Aaron "*were driven out* from Pharaoh's presence."

The plague was sent. Moses was commanded by the Deity to stretch out his hand over the land; and an east wind blew and brought locusts filling the sky till the land was darkened:—"before them there were no such locusts as they, neither after them shall there be such." Everything green on the ground or among the trees was eaten up, the land was stripped bare.

The king sent for Moses and Aaron in haste; and said to them,—

"I have sinned against the Lord your God, and against you. Now, therefore, forgive, I pray thee, my sin only this once, and entreat the Lord your God that he may take away from me this death only."

They complied; and a strong west wind rising immediately afterward, carried off the locusts toward the Red Sea till not one was left behind.

But the king's obstinacy was not yet overcome. His heart, under the repetitions of these trials only grew harder, and his will more perverse. His people were beginning to be in despair; for the monarch's pertinacity returned after every discomfiture; there seemed to be no end of these visitations, and the miseries from them were increasing in intensity. All hearts were quaking through fear of the future. What would come next? The monarch's obstinacy was unyielding; sacred as he was in their eyes—the representative of their god, Phra,—it was evident to them that he was in antagonism to some mysterious power, having all nature at its command. These two men, the commissioners

from that invisible, mysterious power, had, through that strange Might upholding them, risen into colossal proportions before the nation; were regarded with overwhelming fear by the Egyptians, and were looked upon with hope and confidence by their brethren, the slaves scattered over the land. These slaves were already restive; were beginning to talk confidently of freedom; were even now showing signs of resistance to the taskmasters; the old feelings of hatred to their oppressors, of personal enmities, of long pent-up earnestness for revenge, were beginning now to bubble up, ready to overflow by means of this new heat applied to the great caldron of their passions.—What was in the future? What was coming next?

The Egyptians might indeed well ask this,—for their king was set in his obstinacy. While they were still asking it, they noticed with horror a darkness settling over their land, so thick and black that it seemed finally to be a blackness of darkness that might be touched and felt. It lasted for three days. Men's hearts gave way utterly under it. With light for our eyes, we can meet evils advisedly and combat them; but here, in this utter extinction of all light, terrors were magnified, fears had the entire rule, the blackness filling and oppressing the atmosphere filled also men's hearts, giving to them the blackness of horror and despair.

So people sat in their Egyptian homes, and talked in the long darkness; sometimes in whispers, as if fearful of rousing still more the mysterious power around them; sometimes breaking into loud outcries from present distress; sometimes filled with apprehensions of greater terrors yet to come. "They saw not one another, neither rose any from his place for three days." They were afraid to move; *fear had universal rule.*

The Israelites, however, had light as usual, at Goshen.

Sitting down now at Goshen, during the horrors of that blackness of darkness in the rest of the land, we will our-

selves converse about such mysteries. Of course these visitations upon the Egyptians were miraculous: and we are to have before us in this book still greater miracles for our contemplation;—the crossing of the Red Sea; the feeding of more than two millions of people, for nearly forty years, with manna in the wilderness, with water also, and other necessaries of life; beside other instances of deliverances and of God's care.

What is a miracle? It is a suspension or a reversal of the ordinary laws over physical matter. God, for the safety and well-being of his creatures, proceeds by a uniformity of action, which we call a law or laws of nature. A law of nature is simply *a uniformity of action* on the part of the Creator, without which his creatures could have no anticipation of, and make no preparation for, the future. It is for our good that it should be so: and equally for the same reason, we may expect the Deity *to depart from this uniformity*, when, in his wisdom and benevolence, he sees this to be requisite. A miracle is therefore no more impossible, and no more an improbability as regards the Deity, than is a law of nature, when as good a reason occurs for a miracle. But the very reason for a law of nature will render miracles a rare occurrence; and also, we may expect them only when the occasion is worthy of such unusual action of Divine Providence.

Now in these writings in our Scriptures we have *God in history*. God is always in history, but man in his blindness cannot always see him or find him out. Man, even in most advanced age and in his wisest state of intellect in this world, is but infantile compared with the infinities of knowledge, and of time. Even Newton could put his hands on only a few links in the endless chain of knowledge, and then could go no further. So with all men. We know a few of the qualities of things, as of electricity, of light, of heat, etc.; but what is electricity? what is light? what is

heat? And if so in physical matter, what must it be with God's moral dealings with his creatures? Our ignorance is still greater there, because these subjects are more abstruse, and more hidden from our sight. And yet knowledge on these things is far more important to us than knowledge on the others.

For instance, if we could really see God in all history, the knowledge would be of the highest importance to us. But we cannot. History is too large and too wide for us, and our faculties are too limited and our time here too short. We cannot trace God and the workings of his moral laws, even in a small community, or even in one individual, although the Deity and his laws are operating in all.

But we have a history in which God comes revealed,—not fully, because for this neither our faculties nor our condition will admit; yet so that we can study him there; and there also get the clue for studying him in all other history, if we so desire. In the Jewish history he makes a demonstration of himself; not continuously, but in flashes here and there; and we are not only able to recognize him there, but also by means of this history we may also be able to recognize him in other histories, where it is important that we should do so.

Here, for instance, in the case now under consideration, were slaves to be set free. They were people recognizing him —feebly, it is true—but still exercising that recognition; and therefore objects of his especial care. He desired to free them. They were important to their masters, essential indeed to the ease of the Egyptians, who were, of course, unwilling to part with them. God produces their liberation through a series of acts which, to our apprehension, are evident miracles—things where he has plainly impressed his power, and we can clearly see him in the acts. Such demonstrations of himself,—if we mortals can, and dare, judge of the Infinite—were worthy of him; for we have in the history of

the Israelites, a clue by which we can trace him in all history. Nations ever since have looked for God in history, and to some degree have found him there; and far oftener should we find him, if we were to try with clearer purposes of right in our hearts, through this clue given to us in the history of this people written by himself, with himself and with his laws for nations exhibited there. Nor is this period in Egypt now under consideration so far exceptional to all history as it may seem to us to be. It appears to be exceptional, because the facts belonging to it, back of what human eyes can see, are revealed to us in Scripture: but we have lately had a brushing away of slavery from our own country, and by ways that every one must acknowledge to be strangely exceptional, and by means entirely unforeseen and unexpected. If God in the history of this recent deliverance could be shown to us by revelation, we might possibly see many acts as exceptional as those in the deliverance from Egypt, although they seem now to us to have been according to the usual laws regulating our world. There is, doubtless, in all human affairs a mingling, inexplicable by us, of the exceptional and the regular in nature; and of the Divine sovereignty harmonizing with man's free agency. We know and can know but little of the infinite in God, but it was important for us that such demonstrations of his constant rulership over the world as we can understand should be made to us; and they are made in revelation,—very strikingly in the case which we are now considering.

There was one more demonstration to be made. It was to be the slaying of all the first-born in Egypt. Many a heart has recoiled from that strange, horrible winding up of these miracles; and has stood contemplating it with silent queryings about God as a doer of such things: and yet—and the coincidence is a very singular one—we have just been going through scenes in our own country, where the first-born in it,—that is, our bravest and our best, very

many thousands of them,—have been slain, and this resulting also in a deliverance from cruel slavery. This last has seemed to us to be according to the laws among men; but it may well set us to thinking; and in these thoughts we shall find many helps from this history of the Israelites so full of the miraculous in the delivery from bondage in Egypt. God's acts among nations even now seem very often to take the form of miracles.

At the end of the third day of this darkness which might "be felt," Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron. A strong and fearful compulsion was upon him, but he wished still to keep a hold upon the Israelites. It has been obvious that from the very first, he understood fully the meaning of the demands by Moses.

"Go ye," he said, "serve the Lord: only let your flocks and your herds be stayed: let your little ones also go with you." The answer was,

"Thou must give us also sacrifices, and burnt-offerings, that we may sacrifice unto the Lord our God. Our cattle also shall go with us: there shall not an hoof be left behind: for thereof must we take to serve the Lord our God; and we know not with what we must serve the Lord, until we come thither."

The issue between the two had now been fully made. Pharaoh's feelings grew stern and determined.

"Get thee from me," he cried, "take heed to thyself, see my face no more; for in that day thou seest my face, thou shalt surely die." The answer was—

"Thou hast spoken well, I will see thy face again no more."

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE EXODUS.

WHILE the events in the last chapter were transpiring, the Israelites, scattered all over the land, were agitated, anxious, nervous, and watchful. Their home was chiefly still at Goshen, but a very large number of them, called upon for servile work, were engaged in the quarries at the mountains bordering the Nile-valley eastwardly, and also at the various constructions going on in the country and at preparing bricks, and as slaves in agricultural work. Ignorant they were, debased, brutalized by the unremitting hard work. They were closely watched by their task-masters; but from the first of these proceedings news had been spread among them by stealthy messengers, and where speech was not allowed, by secret signs; and they knew, more or less clearly, of the demands by Moses for their deliverance. Then came the plagues, one after another, all open to the observation of slave as well as master; and hope crept into the hearts of the former and increased, while the alarm of the latter was also obvious. The lash of the task-master was less frequent and less severe, unless in instances where madness in revenge nerved the overseer's arm. Wonderings and queryings, alarms or hopes were agitating the communities everywhere in city and country; and the Israelites were beginning to look in earnest expectation, and, where they could do it stealthily, to move toward their homes in Goshen. After a while, when hail and locusts had destroyed all vegetation, many of the Egyptian masters were willing to be saved from the necessity of feeding their slaves, and from this cause or disgust, bade them depart: and thus there was a gradual congregating of the Hebrew

race down in the north-east corner of the land. Doubtless among the early items of news carried to them over the country was one also, that they were to ask or seek[1] from the Egyptians valuable articles of easy transportation,—jewels of silver and gold; and this was now repeated with greater urgency: for they were stimulated by a feeling that a crisis was approaching, and the native people were often anxious to propitiate them, and perhaps their God, by a ready yielding to such requests. The slaves felt that they had fairly earned all that they now received. "Moreover, the man Moses was very great in the land of Egypt, in the sight of Pharaoh's servants, and in the sight of the people." There was, however, no plundering by the expectant Hebrews. Both portions of the community now waited in subdued silence and terror for the next development. It was to be a frightful one, as declared by Moses to Pharaoh just before leaving the royal presence. It was—

"Thus saith the Lord. About midnight will I go out into the midst of Egypt: and all the first-born in the land of Egypt shall die, from the first-born of Pharaoh that sitteth upon his throne, even unto the first-born of the maid-servant that is behind the mill; and all the first-born of beasts. And there shall be a cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more. But against the children of Israel shall not a dog move his tongue, against man or beast: that ye may know how that the Lord doth put a difference between the Egyptians and Israel. And all these thy servants shall come down unto me, and bow down themselves unto me, saying, Get thee out, and all the people that follow thee; after that will I go out." Then in anger he had left the royal presence.

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[1] The meaning of the Hebrew word is *to ask, demand, require, seek, beg, request, interrogate, borrow, lend.*

The same supernatural admonitions which had guided him all along, informed him now that the monarch would not yield until after this visitation; but that then deliverance would come. He and Aaron began therefore to prepare their people for a sudden departure.

Consternation was now everywhere seizing upon the Egyptians. Reports of this recent interview between their king and Moses, and of the threats of the latter, had spread with the rapidity which must spring from such an awful warning; and the strict fulfilment of previous threats seemed to warrant belief in the coming fulfilment of this. But the idea was most horrible! *A devoted victim in every family, from the king to his meanest subject!* And there was to be no escape; no avoidance; for the same mysterious Power which had already heaped so many woes upon them was to send and govern this! All hearts were filled with a deep and settled agony of fear. The victims that were to be, writhed and shrieked or grovelled in their fearful expectancy: friends looked on aghast: tears and shrieks and horror were in every house, even before the visitation came.

The Hebrews, in the mean time, were making their preparations. Moses had issued an ordinance declaring that this month, Abib, was always hereafter to be the beginning of their year. On the 10th of it, each family, or if too small in number, then united with others, were now to take a lamb or goat "of the first year," and on the 14th were to sacrifice it, and then, with a bunch of hyssop to sprinkle its blood on "the two side-posts and on the upper door-post" of their houses, so that the destroying angel coming at the following midnight might know that he was not to enter this dwelling. They were to eat the flesh that night; as he said, "with your loins girded, your shoes on your feet, and your staff in your hand: and ye shall eat it in haste." This was to be called the Passover, a word

commemorative of the angel's passing by their dwellings, and such feast was to be observed as a memorial in all the future generations of Israel. The elders of the people had now been called together, and directions had been given to them, and thence had been circulated among all the communities in Goshen. Then the lamb or goat, having been killed, and the blood sprinkled, and the offering eaten with staff in hand and sandals on the feet,—the people waited in such a nervous, agitated state of feeling as it is impossible for any one to describe.

The Egyptians also were waiting. A pall of horror was over the land. They knew of the orders issued to the Hebrews, and knew that this was to be the night. Encircled, hemmed in, doomed, they waited; looking at each other with ghastly faces, as the hours of that night began to pass by. Wailings, groans, fear, horror were in every house. Every sound was startling; and yet silence was more terrible than noise.——

— Midnight came.—"There was a great cry in Egypt for there was not a house where there was not one dead." The first-born in the land, "from the first-born of Pharaoh that sat on his throne, unto the first-born of the captive that was in the dungeon; and all the first-born of cattle," —*all were dead, struck down! smitten by that invisible power, to which resistance was felt to be all in vain.*

Pharaoh sent for Moses and Aaron. They found a pale, ghastly throng of courtiers around the horror-stricken monarch. He cried,

"Rise up and get you forth from among my people, both ye and the children of Israel: and go, serve the Lord, as ye have said. Also take your flocks and your herds, as ye have said, and be gone: and bless me also."

The courtiers joined in the entreaty, and outside, there was the same urgency for the Hebrews to be gone "in haste: for they said, We be all dead men."

As day came, first tinting the sky with faintest hue, and then rapidly growing out into full splendor, as it always does in that country, it opened upon a whole immense nation in motion: for the Israelites had been expecting to move and were prepared for it; and they all felt that there might be a necessity for rapid movement. For no one could tell when there would be a change in the mind of this fickle monarch and of his people, when they should recover from the shock of their loss during the night. Resentment and a stern desire for revenge would also then be added to all the previous feelings of the Egyptians.

So the Israelites hastened: and as the sun was casting his early beams over this level landscape, it fell on more than two millions[1] of people in motion, with their cattle and

[1] Robinson supposes them to have been equal to about two and a half millions, estimated probably from the number of those twenty years and upward "able to go forth to war," which was 603,550 (Num. i. 46). The amount of these numbers need not surprise us, if we remember that Jacob was the head not only of a family but of a tribe; and the number that Abraham reckoned (three hundred and eighteen fighting men) among his retainers. These, by the Jewish rite, were incorporated into his family (Gen. xvii. 13); and we may suppose an equal number similarly situated in the tribe of Jacob. His own family amounted to seventy-nine when he emigrated to Egypt. If we allow thirty-six years to a generation, or six generations between that time and the Exodus, and a multiplication by six to each individual, we shall have more than three millions of Jacob's own descendants. We are informed (Ex. i. 7), that the people "increased abundantly and multiplied and waxed exceeding mighty:" but this was not all; for in the Exodus it is recorded that "a mixed multitude went up also with them" (Ex. xii. 38), probably people who had been slaves like themselves and were glad to escape in their company.

Adam Clarke, in his Commentary, estimates their whole number at 3,263,000.

The Rev. Dr. Cumming, in his work, "Moses Right and Bishop Colenso Wrong," has a passage from which we extract the following:

"We are told that a special blessing of vast increase of seed was repeatedly promised (Gen. xii. 2; xv. 5; xvii. 6; xxii. 17), and renewed to Isaac (xxv. 23) and Jacob xxviii. 14; xxxii. 12; xlvi. 3). We are told that this blessing rested specially on the Israelites in Egypt (Ex. i. 7). We

such articles as they could conveniently transport. The habits of a nomadic life helped them now greatly in this rapid exodus, for many of them had been accustomed to sudden transits from place to place. A confused multitude they were, in spite of any efforts of their elders to reduce them to order; for they had at present only one wish,—that of a rapid escape and safety. Behind them was the land of bondage, with memorials all over it of their groans, and of stripes inflicted, and of long years of suffering; with them now was relief; before them was a prospect of safety. Therefore, confusedly, nervously, rapidly, the immense throng, covering all the country as far as the eye could reach, were in motion, rejoicing, wondering, felicitating each other, and yet indeed scarcely able to believe in the actuality of their escape. It was all so strange and so much like a dream, that they felt as if they might yet awake and be aroused to the old frightful realities. Thus in confusion they hurried on, covering all the landscape. The number was immense, seemingly countless; for in addition to the

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are told that Joseph saw Ephraim's children of the third generation, etc. (Gen. l. 23). Joseph was about thirty-four years of age when his sons were born (Gen. xli. 46–50), and he died aged one hundred and ten years (l. 26); hence it follows that, in this instance, the fourth generation was born and four generations were alive together only seventy-five years after the descent into Egypt. We are told that Joshua was the tenth descent from Joseph (1 Chron. vii. 22–27); that is, there were ten generations within the space of two hundred and fifteen years' residence in Egypt. . . . We have many incidental proofs that the Israelites married very young, and that three or four generations were often alive together. . . . Suppose that two hundred and fifteen years in Egypt equalled seven generations. Suppose that each man had four sons at the age of thirty (Benjamin had ten before that time): suppose the number of males that went down and afterward became fathers to be sixty-seven. Calculating upon these data, the number of souls at the Exodus would amount to 2,195,456. And this does not include the descendants of Jacob's servants, who were doubtless numerous: nor does it take into account additional children born after the father attained the age of thirty, nor the more rapid increase of those born before that age."

Israelites, was with them "a mixed multitude" of other people[1] taking advantage of this opportunity to escape.

Their course, they were after a while surprised to find, was south-eastwardly.[2] Palestine, to which they knew that they were bound, was toward the north, and comparatively but a short distance off; but this south-easterly course would be a long one, and might involve them in dangerous complications; but at present their joy on the deliverance mastered all other feelings and checked all doubts. Then, as time passed, they saw before them in the sky, a cloud in the form of a pillar, which seemed to be placed there as a guide; for, as they advanced, it still continued and kept its position in advance. All day it led them,—this strange pillar-shaped cloud—guiding them toward the south-east; then, when the day closed and night was setting in, it changed to a pillar of fire, up before them in the sky. This rested finally as a sign for them to rest: they were indeed tired, and thankful for the signal to stop. Resting and gazing upward at that light, so different from anything that they had ever before seen, not flickering as if to be transient, not scintillating as if exhausting itself, but a quiet, gentle light, giving illumination, but not dazzling to the eye;—gazing upward at it, they felt that God was still with them in an especial manner: and so they lay down, trustingly, for their much-needed repose.

Their day's journey,—or it may perhaps more properly be called flight—had been from Rameses to Succoth, the former of which we have seen to be at the eastern termination of the canal cut by the monarch of that name. The position of the latter can only be conjectured; but inasmuch as we know that their direction was toward the head

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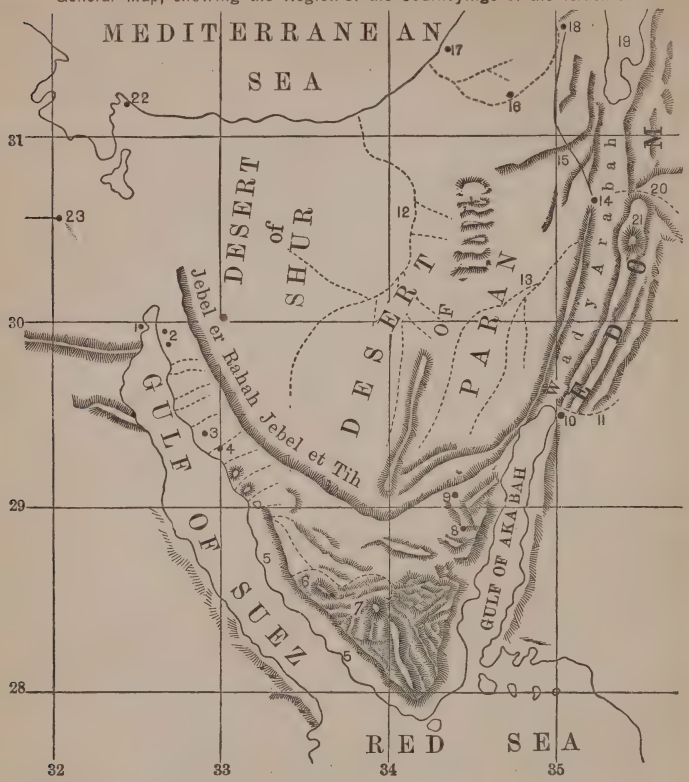
[1] Ex. xii. 38.

[2] The reason for this is given in Ex. xiii. 17: "for God said Lest, peradventure, the people repent when they see war, and they return to Egypt."

General Map, showing the Region of the Journeyings of the Israelites.



23. Rameses, the starting-point in the Exodus.
1. Suez.
2. Fountains Naba and Musa.
3. Fountain believed to be "Marah."
4. Fountain believed to be "Elim."
5, 5. Supposed to be the "Desert of Sin."
6. Mount Serbal.
7. Mount Sinai.
8. Ain Hudhera, supposed to be Hazeroth.
9. El Ain.
10. Akabah, about the sites of Ezion-gaber and Elath.
11. Wady Ithm, by which the Israelites are supposed to have passed to the east of Edom.
12. River of Egypt and its confluents.
13. Wady Jerafeh (probable route of the Israelites from Hazeroth to Kadesh-barnea).
14. Supposed to be Kadesh-barnea.
15. Es Sufah, supposed site of the defeat of the Israelites.
16. Beersheba.
17. Gerar (near the present Gaza).
18. Hebron.
19. Dead Sea.
20. Wady Ghuweir (probably "the king's highway" into Edom), Num. xx. 17.
21. Mount Hor.
22. Pelusium, probably the ancient Avaris.

of the gulf of Suez, distant thirty-five miles, and that they were three days in getting to this latter, we may form a conclusion with tolerable certainty respecting the place. Its name signifies "Booths."

The time of the year corresponded to the beginning of our April.[1] The Israelites, notwithstanding the novelty of their situation at Succoth slept soundly, worn out as they were by the previous night's watching and excitements, and the day's march; and in the morning, as they waked up at Succoth, it required a moment or two for them to gather up their recollections, and to know that they were actually *free*. FREE! the thought sent a thrill through their hearts; and they were soon on their feet looking around at the strange scenes of this immense multitude rising into life, and of the increasing activity on the wide, open ground. And, up in the sky, rested still that cloud-like, huge pillar, which presently also began to be in motion, still conducting them toward the south-east. The provisions which they had brought with them from Egypt furnished them with bread and fruit; their flocks and cattle, of which they had abundance, with milk and meat. Then quickly over that immense extent of country was a whole nation in motion; and everywhere, as they went along, were heard shouts of joy, instruments of music, laughter and other sounds of cheerfulness and happiness filling the morning air. Yet, as they proceeded, with the more thoughtful were many apprehensions of dangers that might yet come from Egypt, and many a glance backward to note the signs on the horizon toward the west.

But no danger appeared. The great company went on; travelling more slowly this day than on the previous one; for the children were becoming foot-sore; and there were many infants and aged people whose comfort had to be con-

[1] This was the 16th of Abib: Abib answers to a part of our March and April.

sulted. The first exhilaration of their escape had passed, and fatigue was beginning to be felt. The cloud conducting them was watched more and more earnestly by many thousands of tired ones in the vast moving throngs, some of them, as the hours passed on, beginning to change their glad laughter into sounds of complaint; and when at last the pillar of cloud stopped near a place called Etham, the multitudes welcomed the rest. Many of the elders, however, remembered with deep anxiety, that they were yet only twenty-five miles from Rameses, and that just back of it was the powerful Egyptian nation now, probably, beginning to wake up from the stupor of its terrible visitation, and perhaps, also, to indulge a desire for revenge.

The situation of Etham is not known, except that it was at the termination of the cultivated ground and at the beginning of the wilderness. Beyond it, eastwardly, was bare, hard ground, covered with black pebbles, which would be severe on the already tender feet. About ten miles distant, in the direction of their advance, were the waters of the Red Sea. The night's rest at Etham had been much needed; and yet in the morning they did not feel thoroughly refreshed. Almost all of them were on foot, and any one who has tried pedestrian journeying, knows that on the second morning the system, not yet accustomed to the severe strain upon it feels the exhaustion more than at any other time. Foot-sore and jaded, they had little disposition to answer fresh calls for effort.

But the call was made. In the early day, the conducting cloud began again to move. During the night the pillar of fire had rested over them,—a quiet, bright assurance, it seemed to them to be, that God was with them: in the morning light it had faded and changed to cloud, and the cloud was now again leading on.

But whither? The more intelligent of the Israelites knew that it was conducting them directly toward a spot

where nature was opposing to them a seeming impossibility of advance. And then,—what if the Egyptians should come behind?

Still they were conducted on directly toward the sea.

The day's journey was a very toilsome one;—not very long, being only ten or twelve miles; but the small rounded stones wounded the feet, and the vast company were feeling greatly the exhaustion from the previous excitement and the fatigues of the way. Heart-weary they were, as well as weary in their limbs; for they were missing the comforts in their Egyptian life, which, it was true, had not been many, but were still greater than here. Liberty, so joyous at the outset, had to be purchased with suffering: "Was the suffering," some of them murmured, "greater even in Egypt than now?" Before them, too, were such uncertainties, perhaps far greater trials than they were now enduring; moroseness and gloom were already beginning to take, in some, the place of joy.

Still on, over that dreary, flat desert they marched through the whole day; for the cloud was still moving on. Some distance on their right was a range of lofty mountains, but it afforded little relief to the eye; for the mountains were quite bare like the desert, and the sun fell upon them, as it did on the level ground, in a fiery glare. The vast pillar of cloud, it is true, was shading the Israelites;[1] but all around them nature seemed to be roasted and burnt up in this furnace, where they themselves, even with the help of this shade, were panting for breath. All at once, however, arose the cry of "The sea!" "The sea!" and every one pressed on toward the sight, which was, to their eyes, a most welcome relief. But the more thoughtful were greatly perplexed. For, if the Egyptians should pursue them, they would now be hemmed in;—on the south by the rugged moun-

[1] See Ps. cv. 39: also 1 Cor. x. 1, 2.

tain which projected close up to the water, leaving no place for their vast host to pass in its front;—on the east by the waters of the gulf; and on the west and north by their enemy.

The cloud rested now as they drew near to the water, and the divine admonition instructed Moses, "Speak unto the children of Israel, that they turn and encamp before Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, over against Baal-zephon: before it shall ye encamp by the sea:" to which was added the information that they would be pursued, and that here a final and signal deliverance would be wrought.

So they encamped, the great multitude glad of the rest to their bodies, and yet in their minds uneasy: for to all it was obvious that there was at least embarassment in their present position; and so there were many doubts and many fears. Thus the approaching gloom of evening was not needed to bring what was already there—gloom upon the heart. Yet in the midst of all this, and in strong contrast with it, was the enjoyment of the young and thoughtless in this novelty of the place;—the long stretch of water gleaming in the setting sun, the bright pebbles and shells on the beach, and the coral for which the shores of the Red Sea are celebrated to this day. So the scene at this evening's encampment was one made up of striking opposites; enjoyment of rest by the old, and of activity and excitement by the young; hopes,—for beyond this sea there would be greater safety; and fears,—for its waters were a seemingly impassable obstacle before them; in some, despondency; trust in some.

All were suddenly roused by a cry that *the Egyptians were coming!* and presently, in the far distance, flashing the rays of the now setting sun, bright armor was to be seen, with moving objects on the dim horizon; and then more distinct marks of a large host; and then a great array of chariots such as were used in battle, and before which kind

of armament, on a level country like this, resistance must be hopeless.

The gloomy fears which had settled on the hearts of the thoughtful among the Israelites were seen to be only too well founded. People were filled with despair. The vast array of war-chariots—six hundred they actually were in number; and the armed horsemen and the foot-soldiers stretching far over the plain, showed fully and clearly the meaning of this pursuit. It was the whole Egyptian army, with Pharaoh at its head. He had roused up at the cry from his subjects, "Why have we done this, that we have let Israel go from serving us?" while, with their selfish feeling of interest, was mingled an intense wish for vengeance upon those for whom their first-born had been slain.

Over all the encampment of Israel arose a tumultuous sound: from some it was a prayer to God; from far the greater part it consisted of objurgations against Moses. To him they hastened—

"Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? Wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt? Is not this the word that we did tell thee in Egypt, saying, Let us alone, that we may serve the Egyptians? For it had been better for us to serve the Egyptians, than that we should die in the wilderness."

He stood calmly amid this storm of reproaches and indignation, and replied—

"Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will show you to-day: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen to-day, ye shall see them again no more for ever. The Lord shall fight for you, and ye shall hold your peace."

They gazed wonderingly at him, so calm, so confident in his manner, so assuring in his words. They had often heard his declarations that the divine power would help,

and had witnessed its help. They tried now to trust his word, but felt that it required a powerful exercise of faith. All knew that the crisis in their life had certainly come.

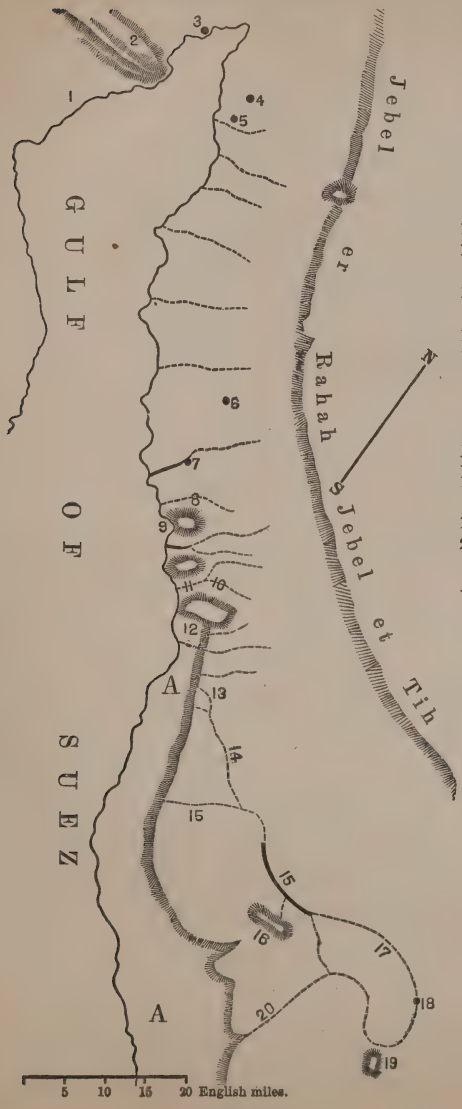
CHAPTER XXXIII.

THE CRISIS: THE DELIVERANCE.

THE Egyptians thought it best not to make an attack that evening. The Israelites were hemmed in and there seemed to be no possibility of escape. Resistance might be expected from them, for they were desperate men, and could muster a force, which, if not well armed, was still formidable by its numbers: in the morning, the war-chariots, the steel-clad horsemen, and the vast array of infantry would bear down and would carry dismay among them, and have an easy victory over such a rabble. Yet there were many among the Egyptians whose hearts misgave them; for what were chariots and embattled armies against such a mysterious Power as had been fighting for the Hebrews? Moses alone, with such support as that, seemed to be more than all Egyptian hosts. Therefore the Egyptians themselves were ill at ease.—The morning would decide.

Night came down, enveloping both the multitudes. It was not a night of darkness, however, to the Israelites, for to their great surprise the pillar of cloud which had rested before them, moved to their rear, and cast a brightness upon them, while, as their scouts on the edge of their encampment might perceive, it cast a thick darkness over the encampment of their enemy. The Egyptians, too, saw that the sky was shut out from them—the unusual blackness above and around reminding them of the thick night of

Map from the Crossing of the Red Sea to Sinai.



1. Wady Tawarik.
2. Jebel Atakah.
3. Suez.
4. Ain Naba.
5. Ain Mûsa.
6. Ain Hawarah, supposed to be "Marah."
7. Supposed to be "Elim."
8. Wady Useit.
9. Jebel Hŭmmâm.
10. Wady Shubeikeh.
11. Wady Taiyibeh and Encampment by the Sea.
12. Encampment where manna was given.
13. Wady Shellal.
14. Wady Mukatteb.
15. Wady Feiran, the black line showing the present flow of water.
16. Mount Serbal.
17. Wady Sheikh.
18. Supposed by Robinson to be Rephidim.
19 Sinai.
20. Easier way to Sinai from the Sands.

A. A. Sandy shore, supposed by Robinson to be the Wilderness of Sin, Ex. xvi. 1. Of these wadys, only Feiran has a constant stream; the others are dry except after heavy rains.

three days preceding the destruction of their first-born. The blackness seemed to creep through their whole system, and they rested in fear.

No rest among the Israelites. They had been forewarned to be ready for moving; and then when the night had fully set in, they were put in motion directly toward the water. An east wind like a hurricane had arisen and was blowing directly against them and upon the sea, as they struggled down to the shore; but no wind, even with the violence with which this came sweeping down over the head of the gulf, could make such a change as they saw now in descending to what in the evening had been that broad space of water. The strong light from the mysterious cloud showed that what had, on their arrival, been covered by the sea, *had become a bare and waterless bed!* On their right hand and on their left, the water was piled up like a wall; before them was an open highway of dry land for their passage; and the cloud-light gleamed over it all and on the shores on the opposite side, inviting them over to what seemed to be a place of safety.

On they went, the vast multitudes, wondering, thankful, joyful, hastening with certainty of footstep; for the cloud-light showed every inequality in the ground: onward, till they ascended on the Arabian side, and spread along the shores; the foremost looking back over the crowds of men and women and children and cattle still pouring over, along that safe, dry way, with the water still piled up like a wall on the right hand and on the left. More like a dream it seemed than a reality; and people cleared their eyes and felt each other, and talked, to assure themselves that it was, indeed, a reality.

The last one of the vast multitude had at length passed over. An agitating time it had been, even to the foremost, who had soon been able to gain the opposite shore; more agitating still to those who were in the rear. But even the

rearmost crowds were safe now, the cattle also secure; and the eye, now looking backward, saw only an empty space,—the waters of the sea still kept back.

But that space was not empty long. The enemy's scouts had, even in the thick darkness around them, become aware at length that the Israelites were escaping; and the Egyptian hosts had been roused up and put in order for warlike pursuit. They came rushing on; perceived the open way across the channel, and entered upon it with all the fierceness of men determined not to be robbed of success which they had just deemed so certain. It was the morning watch (two o'clock) when the chariots and horsemen and foot-soldiers reached the mid-channel, where the chariots in front soon began to impede the way, their wheels dragging heavily, sinking and loosened in this strange road already rendered heavy by the many thousand feet preceding them. A supernatural power seemed presently to be at work there. They felt it; they turned to retreat, for the cry of alarm was spreading among them,—

"Let us flee from the face of Israel; for the Lord fighteth for them against the Egyptians."

So they were crying to each other and the whole host turned to fly. It was too late. Moses, whose rod, when stretched out over the sea, on the previous evening, had caused the waters to divide as we have seen, was now on the Arabian shore looking down, in the earliest morning light, on this confused scene of chariots and soldiers; and was supernaturally directed to stretch out the rod again. He did so. The waters rushed together and the whole Egyptian host was swallowed up in their depths: "there remained not so much as one of them."

The day broke fully at last and shone upon the usual scene of a far outstretched waste of waters,—now the silent tomb of that vast host, all buried there except some corpses which floated up and were cast, unsightly masses, on either

shore. On the Arabian side were scattered widely the rescued Israelites, looking with curiosity over the new scenes about them, and with feelings of gratitude up toward Jehovah, who had come so wonderfully to their deliverance. Moses called them together for a hymn of thanksgiving; and we have the triumphant words chanted by him and the multitudes:

"I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously," etc., the whole of it a grand hymn of praise and terminating as with a chorus, "The Lord shall reign for ever and ever."

His sister Miriam then took a timbrel;[1] and other women with similar musical imstruments following, they showed their joy with music, and with dances such as were used in their solemn feasts. Their tones, as they rose up in the bright morning air, took that rich and full gladness and tenderness which are known only in the female voice; and all nature around seemed to respond as they chanted in her brother's words, "Sing ye to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously," words which are so happily represented in a modern lyric that we may properly quote it here:

"Sound the loud timbrel o'er Egypt's dark sea!
Jehovah has triumphed,—his people are free.

"Sing,—for the pride of the tyrant is broken,
His chariots, his horsemen, all splendid and brave—
How vain was their boasting!—The Lord hath but spoken,
And chariots and horsemen are sunk in the wave.
Sound the loud timbrel o'er Egypt's dark sea!
Jehovah has triumphed,—his people are free.

[1] The timbrel was doubtless such as we still see on the Egyptian monuments. It resembled the tambourine of modern times, except that it was without the hollowed pieces of metal now attached to the frame. It was circular or oblong; in the latter case was sometimes in two parts, separated by a cross-bar. "It was," says Wilkinson, respecting the Egyptians, "a favorite instrument in religious ceremonies and at private banquets. It was played by men and women, more usually by the latter, who often sang and danced to its sound."

"Praise to the Conqueror, praise to the Lord!
His word was our arrow,—his breath was our sword!

"Who shall return to tell Egypt the story
Of those she sent forth in the hour of her pride?
For the Lord hath looked out from his pillar of glory,
And all her brave thousands are dash'd in the tide.
Sound the loud timbrel o'er Egypt's dark sea!
Jehovah has triumphed,—his people are free."

The place of this crossing cannot now be ascertained with full certainty; and the subject has given rise to much discussion among travellers and critics. The accompanying map will show the present outline of the water; but there is reason to suppose that the drifting of the desert sands has made changes to the northward of Suez (No. 3 on the map), nearly or quite filling up spaces that were covered with water in those ancient times. Some travellers have selected this place now filled up as that of the crossing: some, on the other hand, have decided in favor of the Wady Tawarik (No. 1 on map), fifteen miles south of Suez, as the spot for that evening's encampment and the one whence they made their transit across the gulf, which is here, at the least, twelve miles wide, and could not then have been less. Robinson supposes that the encampment was adjoining the present city of Suez, and that the crossing was just below this city, the water here being three or four miles in width, according to the state of the tide. The difference between high and low tide is six or seven feet. At the projecting point below the city commences a sand-bar which stretches to the other side, and in low tides makes a fording place, not considered, however, a safe one. In 1799, Bonaparte attempted it in the gathering twilight, but the rising tide coming with greater rapidity than was expected, he and his suite were exposed to great danger, although they had guides well acquainted with the spot. The circumstance of the bar is, however, now mentioned merely as one of the

geographical facts of the place; for such a bar was not needed in the crossing by the Israelites; nor, any more, was it necessary that the united influence of the east wind and an ebb tide should have laid all the channel bare,—the hypothesis of some writers on this subject. On the contrary, we are informed that the water "was a wall unto them on their right hand and on the left."

As respects the place of crossing there are two circumstances which must govern our conclusions, and which appear to decide pretty clearly in favor of this spot immediately adjoining Suez on the south: 1. The width must have been so restricted that the whole of the Israelite host, two and a half million or more in number, with their flocks could cross between the beginning of darkness and two o'clock A. M. (Ex. xiv. 24): and 2. It must have been wide enough to contain at once all the Egyptain host,—the six hundred chariots, &c. For this latter, the narrow space of water supposed formerly to exist north of the present head of the gulf would not have sufficed; and for the former, the wide space of ten or twelve miles, opposite Wady Tawarik would have been quite too great,—a day's journey indeed for such a confused host even with the aid of sunlight. The last of the Israelites to enter would be more than an hour after the first, and would require nearly two hours to cross a distance of four miles, which with their flocks in addition, would occupy the full time to two o'clock. The spot selected by Dr. Robinson appears therefore to answer, and to be the only one that will answer, to all the requisites in the case.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE ADVANCE.

THE minds of the Israelites had risen with a great rebound from the pressure upon them during recent events. Their first utterances had been in lofty hymns, in great rejoicings and general congratulations, and in deep gratitude to God: then the people turned to a deliberate contemplation of the scene around them and of the future.

The scene in all its natural aspects was sufficiently dreary. On the west was the gloomy Mount Atakah[1] (No. 2 on map), which, naked and burnt by the sun, bounded on the south the level plain they had on the previous day been traversing. Still nearer, in that direction, was the sea bordered by no vegetation, but only by dead bodies already swollen and festering in the intense heat. Northwardly, was an open gloomy desert, over which, far off and separated in the whole distance by a barren desert, was Canaan. Eastwardly, was first a bare and gravelly plain, and then, at the distance of fifteen miles, the wall-like ridge of er-Rahah, 4000 feet high, broken in its level sky-line by only a single peak at the south-east,—the peak and ridge alike bare and desolate-looking. On the south was a succession of low, barren sandhills bordered by the sea, which stretched off as far as their sight could extend.

But their hearts were joyous notwithstanding the gloomy sights all around them; for *they were free and were safe.* The cloud also was still resting above them, giving them assurance of the continued Divine presence: it added also its friendly shelter from the burning heat of the sun. After a while, it began to move, exciting hopes in them that they

[1] We adopt the modern names through want of other designations.

might be conducted on to pleasanter scenes than those immediately in sight. At a spot nearly opposite to that where we suppose them to have crossed the sea, and three miles inland, is now a fountain called *Ain Naba* (No. 4 on map), in which the water boils up continually, giving sufficient for two hundred camel-loads at once;[1] the water brackish, but still, until recently, the main dependence of Suez for such supplies. Then, going southwardly, we traverse a slight and very gradual ascent; and at the distance of three miles, reach a steep descent, from the brow of which opens a wide view of the sea on the right, and just before us, of a low plain on which a few stunted palm trees mark the site of *Ain Mûsa* (No. 5), or "the fountain of Moses," about two miles distant. Here are seven fountains, the water dark colored and brackish, and depositing a hard substance, so that mounds have been formed, on the top of which the water flows out. It is soon lost in the plain, but gives moisture enough to sustain about twenty palm-trees or rather palm-bushes, and a scant supply of barley and vegetables.

The Israelites in their anticipation of a journey into the wilderness had supplied themselves with flour; and these fountains of *Ain Naba* and *Ain Mûsa* probably then existed, and for the present afforded them water. The wrecks of the Egyptian army strewn along the shore doubtless also gave them some arms for their 600,000 men, forming "the host" of their camp.

But this great assemblage of nearly three millions of people was little more than a rabble, thus far held together by fear and by the common concentrated interest in the escape. Now, fear was gone and the escape was secured; and the distinct, individualized passions began to rise up and take rule in each breast. Moses had indeed a task

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[1] Robinson.

before him, the hardest that could be laid on any human being. For they were a very debased and very ignorant set of people whom he was now to organize and subject to law; and this, without any authority over them except what could be drawn from recent acts and their own sense of interest. Trustful as he was in the divine power, he might well be appalled at the duty laid on him,—the immense task of bringing order out of such confusion as was presenting itself, and of making consistent the loose, incoherent materials of which this vast company was composed. Under any circumstances of ease and comfort and permanency, this would have been a stupendous undertaking, especially as it had to be done at once; but here, the company was a moving one, straggling along; and they must quickly encounter sufferings in which impatience and all other bad passions would be engendered. Moreover, what a frightful desert was this all around them, compared with the fruitful, well-watered plains which they had just left in Egypt,—the abundance of grain and grass and fruits, and of fish in the rivers and canals. They might soon be expected to cast longing eyes behind them: the bitterness of their servitude would quickly be forgotten in the greater suffering from present want; and then, all semblance of authority being lost, the whole scene might become a frightful struggle of individual passions and necessities. So debased were they and so lost even to all religious sentiment, that it would be in vain to appeal to reason or religion. In their long, abject servitude the passions had been brutalized, as they always are, by slavery; and the religious systems of the Egyptians had so obliterated their own ancient traditions respecting God, or had become so blended with them, that they scarcely knew in what they believed or might believe. Our own eyes, in our land, have seen some of the grossly debasing effects of slavery; but with us it had still had the renovating and purifying influences of Christianity. Take from such slavery

religion and God, and put around it, as publicly honored things, the worship of beasts and of Venus, and we may then have some idea of the mental and moral condition of the multitudes, who in company with Moses, were now straggling along southwardly over the deserts of the Arabian peninsula.

Three days without water! *Such was now the fact.* They had filled their vessels at the springs near the crossing-place, probably forewarned by their leader, who knew to what a dried-up, waterless region the pillar of cloud was conducting them. But this supply among such a people would very soon be exhausted. The vessels became empty, and the whole people soon were panting and the children crying from extreme thirst. Moses and Aaron, who were acquainted with this route, must have looked with awe and with many strangely mingled feelings at that cloud conducting onward the palpitating and already gasping company, over the long, sun-scorched wastes before them; and they knew also that the water in the nearest fountain, three days ahead from the last, was bitter and not drinkable. So they looked wonderingly, and with awe, at that conducting cloud still moving on. It led: they followed, believing, and yet with many strange queryings in their minds respecting the coming results. One result had come already, and was all around them;—murmurs, doubts, rising anger, the beginnings of what was almost an imprecation on themselves.

This region is so little subject to changes that we may consider it as having been then nearly or quite as it is now. First, immediately south of those fountains of Ain Naba and Ain Mûsa, is a succession of low sandhills; then, a gravelly track many miles in extent, crossed at intervals from east to west, with slight depressions (shallow wadys), having in them a few scattered herbs and shrubs, and a few scattering rocks of coral formation, with sand-drifts everywhere formed around opposing obstacles: on the left, still the

bare, gloomy face of the ridge er Rahah; and on the west, the sea, and beyond it the bare ridges of the parallel mountain ranges Atakah and Kulalah.

For two days the company dragged themselves along over the hard surface of these level, gravelly tracts and the shallow depressions and drifts of sand; their hearts, notwithstanding the new freedom, beginning to take the melancholy aspect of everything around them, and their bodies parched with thirst. On the third morning they entered among hills, or banks of sand and pebbles, succeeded presently by hills of limestone blackened with flint; and, winding among these, the view had varied, at last, by a lofty isolated mountain, Jebel Hŭmmâm, by the sea-side. But although of a picturesque outline, the mountain was "black and desolate:" indeed, by this time, the whole company had little heart to observe anything; for they had only one sensation,—a burning, consuming thirst. Their thoughts were continually turning back to the Nile shores, where the waters are so proverbially delicious. And now, as those weary people went palpitating among the hills, where gray rock was varied only by black flint, or in the shallows by drift sand, many of them were ready to barter freedom for a single long draught; for they were on the point of perishing from thirst.

It was then, with indescribable joy, that they heard the cry at last, repeated and spread swiftly over all the company, that water had been reached. All hurried forward, the laggards crowding against the foremost; and all were rejoiced when on reaching the edge of a narrow depression they saw in its bottom scattered green shrubs, the evidence that water was there. They rushed down to drink;—the whole company raised a loud cry of despair and horror;—THE WATER WAS BITTER!

It was doubtless at the same spot where the fountain Hawarah (No. 6 on the map) still exists, distant exactly three days' journey southwardly from Ain Mûsa; the same

fountainless region still lying between the two. The fountain is in a basin six or eight feet in diameter, on the summit of a large mound composed of a whitish rocky substance formed apparently by deposits from the water, which is about two feet deep. "Its taste," says Robinson, "is unpleasant, saltish, and somewhat bitter; but we could not perceive that it was very much worse than that of 'Ayûn Mûsa [Ain Mûsa]; perhaps because we were not yet connoisseurs in bad water. The Arabs, however, pronounce it bitter, and consider it as the worst water in all these regions."[1]

Among the Israelites rose up a universal moan of horror and dismay; for they were perishing;—the children, and old people, and middle-aged, all equally showing parched lips, and features expressive of intense suffering. Their disappointment was turning into a fury of indignation toward Moses, and was beginning to vent itself in audible sounds against him: but he needed no such demonstrations, for no heart among them was more filled with grief than was his. God was the only hope, and the leader was directing earnest cries to him. Nor cried in vain; for the divine influence directed him to a tree, and gave chemical powers to a branch of this when cast into the waters, so that they became pleasant to the taste. God there also, through their leader, entered into a covenant with the people, promising them bodily health if they would "give ear to his commandments and keep all his statutes." But it seemed indeed as if statutes and covenants would avail little, and that there was a necessity for miraculous powers upon heart and mind, in a people so ignorant and so debased as were these late abject slaves of despotic and superstitious masters in Egypt.

From this onward, the progress of the Israelites was more

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[1] Dr. Olin says it resembled to him "a weak solution of Epsom salts."

diversified. The road, soon after leaving this Wady el 'Amârah, passes by a small basin of some fertility, where wheat and barley are raised; and, at the distance of six miles, comes to Wady Ghŭrŭndel (No. 7), a broad valley coming from the mountains on the left and running down to the sea. It strikes most pleasantly on the eye, on account of its verdure, "its straggling trees of several kinds," amongst them a species of tamarisk and mimosa, also a few palm trees raising their stunted forms. Proceeding to the right, down the wady, we come in half an hour to a spring bursting out at the foot of a sandstone rock, and forming a pool of clear water, bordered by sedges. There also, says Bartlett, in describing his visit to this place, "was even, delightful sight! a little grass, and birds were hopping about enjoying the rare luxury. The water, trickling off, pursues its way some distance down the valley, forming a reedy marsh, interspersed with thickets of bushes and dwarf palm trees, and a considerable quantity of tamarisk, with other shrubs; . . . . and, as there are also considerable masses of similar vegetation above this point, there are probably several other springs which nourish it."

This place is almost universally conceded to be the "Elim where the Israelites found twelve wells of water, and threescore and ten palm trees," and where they encamped "by the waters;"[1] and here they probably remained several days.[2] It was only about eight miles from Marah; but the next advance march was to be a long one, and the pleasantness of the spot and the abundance of water would make the delay agreeable. When a day's journey is spoken of, we are doubtless to understand it to be that of their leaders; for the whole company was so large, and would be so given to straggling, that we can scarcely consider them as a compact body in their advance, except so far as would be

[1] Ex. xv. 27. [2] Inference from the time given in Ex. xvi. 1.

produced by their desire to follow closely the leadership of the pillar of cloud, and to keep under its friendly shelter from the sun.

But the cloud finally began to move, and the encampment at Elim was broken up. The refreshment of this rest was indeed necessary; for here a more mountainous tract commenced. Their course is yet kept quite distinctly before us in consequence of the formation of the ground, and by hints in the Sacred Record. Leaving these wells it ascended a low ridge between Wady Ghŭrŭndel and Wady Useit, and gaining this height commanded an extensive view, embracing the lofty, precipitous Jebel Hŭmmâm (No. 9), now close adjoining on the south-west. On the east is a continuation of the heights of er Rahah, but in this part taking the name of Et-Tih. Southwardly, out of a sea of lower hills rise the grand heights of Serbal, the first one of the bare and rough granitic mountains of the peninsula, which are characterized not unaptly as "the Alps unclothed." Then the way descends into Wady Useit (No. 8), resembling Ghŭrŭndel, but not so large, and with small palm trees and some water; then it passes over another ridge to Wady Thâl, and then over another to Wady Shubeikeh (No. 10), which it follows for a short distance in a southerly direction. This last is then joined by another wady; and together they have the name of Wady Taiyibeh (No. 11), which takes its course in a westerly direction to the sea, four miles distant. This latter wady is described as "a fine valley, enclosed with abrupt rocks, with many trees and a little brackish water like the preceding wadys." Where it reaches the sea, there is a high promontory on the north; while on the south the mountains retire for a short distance, leaving a sandy plain with many shrubs extending for about three miles along the shore. This course which we have just been tracing, was the one followed by the Israelites after leaving Elim, eighteen miles distant, a long day's

journey for such a company, but one which they could well perform after their sufficient rest at that place: "They removed from Elim," we are told, and encamped by the Red Sea.[1] They were now beginning to be hemmed in by the mountains,: for even Wady Taiyibeh is described by a traveller as lined by "stern and bold" heights, which give it somewhat of a rude grandeur; and here by the sea they had on the south a lofty, projecting headland, admitting a passage only at low water, or across its rough escarpments. But they passed this; and then they had before them by the shore a sandy plain, from two to four miles wide, and extending, with slight interruptions, to the extremity of the peninsula, one hundred miles distant. Robinson considers this long plain as "the Desert of Sin.[2]

Their first camping-place (No. 12 on the map) on this sandy plain, was to be to the Israelites a most memorable spot. They had now been a month[3] away from Egypt, and their provisions were beginning entirely to fail. In their hurried departure they had laid in such a store of flour as came within their means; and their flocks had on the way supplied them with meat and a scant quantity of milk; and their previous habits in the land of servitude had accustomed them to do without luxuries. But flour was giving out, and flocks were perishing amid this meagre herbage, and a time of starvation seemed to be fast coming upon this immense host. We can see them, in these last days' journeyings, dragging themselves reluctantly along in this further and further penetration among the mountains which seemed to be opening their recesses only thus to provide them with ready graves. That mysterious cloud was still leading them on:—they often asked themselves, Whither? To what? It had lost its novelty; and some were even beginning to doubt its friendliness. Its mystery,—the vapory

[1] Num. xxxiii. 10. [2] See Ex. xvi. 1; Num. xxxiii. 11. [3] Ex. xvi. 1.

pillar by day, the pillar of fire by night,—the mystery ever present and visible, was almost sitting like an oppression on their souls. Ever present, as if watching them,—what was it? A spirit? Good? or bad? It was leading them, some of them thought, as if it might be to their doom? It was an oppression on their untrained, ignorant souls. And this man, Moses, a mystery too! with whom, or with what, was he leagued? and for what? Ignorant and debased these people were, and they reasoned blindly and corruptly. The whole multitude were going on in a kind of maze. Just at this time even wiser and better men might well have been lost in a labyrinth of queryings.

For famine was staring them in the face. This fact every one's convictions showed him in their empty meal-bags and their diminished and still diminishing herds. So, as they followed down that rock-hemmed ravine of Wady Taiyibeh, and afterward straggled over the jutting sea-girt promontory, and then saw only this long, desolate-looking, sandy plain, with the bare sea on one side of it, and the equally bare granite crags on the other,—everywhere only desolation,—they broke out into words, and let their pent-up feelings have vent. The storm of invective of course fell upon Moses and Aaron. The other rulers, if they did not join in it, seem to have interposed no word.

"Would to God," the people cried, "we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh-pots and when we did eat bread to the full: for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness to kill the whole assembly with hunger."

God, however, was the sure helper of all. He told their leaders,

"I will rain bread from heaven for you;" and directed how it was to be gathered. A double supply was to be afforded on the sixth day of the week, so that a portion

might be saved for the seventh, and thus the sanctity of the Sabbath be preserved.

This promise of supply of food was announced to the people by Moses, who added, "What are we? Your murmurings are not against us, but against the Lord;" and he directed Aaron to call upon them,

"Come near before the Lord: for he hath heard your murmurings." As Aaron did so, the people gazed "toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the Lord appeared in the cloud." To individuals such as they were, demonstrations of this kind, directed to their outward senses, were to be the books for them to read. The change to be wrought in this immense multitude of ignorant people, so debased by slavery, can scarcely be conceived by us in our times of enlightenment. What knowledge had they? what means for knowledge, except what came to them through their senses? And yet they were a people who were to be lifted, as soon as possible, into the highest of all sciences, the science of God.

That evening, while many queries as to what was coming were filling their minds, and while all felt that an immediate, pressing need was upon them, flocks of quails came darkening the air and filled the camps. They were a bird well known in the country,[1] but all saw that it was a miraculous, as it was indeed a most welcome and a needed supply.

But there was to be something more than this. Moses had declared to them, on the authority of Jehovah, "At even ye shall eat flesh, and in the morning ye shall be filled

[1] Bartlett, in his explorations of this region says, "We saw here numerous desert partridges, or 'quails,' of which a miraculous supply was afforded to the Israelites on this very spot." The Oriental quail resembles the American partridge in size and appearance. These birds are stated by Hasselquist to be sometimes abundant near the Dead Sea and in Arabia; and Burckhardt saw them in large numbers south of the Dead Sea. In the present case, as in others already noticed, the miracle consisted in a special and extraordinary use of common means.

with bread: and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God." The whole immense company had now had a sufficient meal, and were in the pleasant, satisfactory condition of people in whom a ravenous appetite has been fully gratified. But in the morning they were to have a full sufficiency of bread also; and many queries were started among them, and many conjectures hazarded, as to the manner in which it would appear. So they lay down that night in a truly comfortable state for the present, but impatient for the morrow to bring its solution to their questions respecting the other new supply. The silence by night in those deserts of Arabia is so profound that it is said by travellers that they can hear their own hearts beating there. Eastward of the camp were those solemn old mountains, teaching evermore a lesson of strength and firmness and deep repose. On the west was the sea, an unbroken level, far outspread. Above them shone now, as always, that mysterious pillar of light in its strange, solitary companionship with them, alone in its brightness though many stars were glittering far above. Through the night, a dew descended upon the camp; and watchers there might have noticed, also gently and quietly descending, a small substance of a singular and unknown character, which before morning formed a perceptible stratum upon the ground.

When people waked up in the early dawn their eyes were greeted by this wonderful sight. Moses spoke to them, "This is the bread which the Lord hath given you to eat."

The substance was in small, white grains, of the size of coriander seed, hard and pleasant to the taste. As the dew exhaled they gathered it into heaps, and found that it would make quite a sufficiency of bread for every individual of their company. They "ground it in mills, or beat it in a mortar, and baked it in pans, and made cakes of it; and the taste of it was as the taste of fresh oil."[1] In another

[1] Num. xi. 8.

place we are informed that "the taste of it was like wafers made with honey."[1] They called it *Manna*.[2]

According to the direction of Moses, they were to gather it at the rate of an *omer* (a little more than five pints, or more precisely five and one-tenth pints) for every individual; and no attempt was to be made to lay it up in store for the next day, except on the sixth; each morning would furnish its own supply, except the latter, which was to give a double quantity, so that there need be no gathering on the seventh or the Sabbath.[3] On the sixth they were not only to gather but to bake for the following day. During the earlier part of the day, as the heat of the sun increased, the substance melted and disappeared. Some of the people disregarded the direction of their leader not to store any away, but to depend on a daily supply from heaven; and fearful

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[1] Ex. xvi. 31.

[2] The original in Ex. xvi. 15, is מן הוא : and if we give to the latter word its meaning in times long subsequent to this, the two will signify *what this?* Commentators therefore generally attribute the name *manna* to an exclamation by the wondering and querying multitude. But this use of מן (*man*) *who* or *what*, occurs only in Chaldaic, and is not found till the times of Ezra and Daniel. (See Ezra v. 3, 4, 9; Dan. iii. 15.) Such explanation of commentators seems therefore to be unauthorized and indeed appears, at first sight, to be fanciful. Perhaps it is best not to attempt any, but to take the word simply as it is.

At the present day a gum found in that country is sold to visitors under the name of Manna. It is found on the twigs and branches of a tamarisk shrub, (*Tamarix Gallica mannifera*), from which it exudes in consequence of the puncture of an insect of the *Coccus* kind (*Coccus manniparus*). "It has," says Robinson, "the appearance of gum, is of a sweetish taste and melts when exposed to the sun or to a fire. The Arabs consider it a great delicacy and the pilgrims prize it highly." It is said not to be procured every year, sometimes only after five or six years. It can be preserved by boiling, and is sold at from four to five dollars the pound. Except in name and partly in taste, it of course bears no analogy to the manna afforded to the Israelites.

[3] Here we have the institution of the Sabbath before the Decalogue was given.

probably for the future, attempted to accumulate; but what they laid by became wormy and offensive before the next morning. On the seventh day, some also went out for a gathering; but they found none, and received a Divine reprimand through Moses for their disregard of the heavenly ordinance for the observance of this day. It is worthy of note here, how upon these ignorant and obtuse people, moral commands had to be laid through their senses, as well as by words directed to their reason.

It has been estimated that the omer per day would amount to about 15,000,000 pounds for each week. During the forty years of their wanderings in the wilderness, the supply never failed. The vastness of the miracle sometimes startles the readers of God's Book: but why? It was just as easy for God to send the manna upon the camp as to send the dew. The latter comes to us by what we call natural causes, that is, by evaporation through heat, and next by condensation through cold. But what is heat? how caused? whence its original source? We come here at once into the inexplicable; and the case of manna presents us only one or two links shorter than that of the other. Then again, as to our usual supply of food: how does grain grow? Why does it give its nourishment to us more than do stones? The fact is, that the wisest of men "see through a glass darkly," and then see but a little way. In the case of the Israelites, God was teaching a nation who were to be a demonstration for him before the world then, and through all subsequent history. He was helping us to see him in all nature and in all history; and he was doing it in the best way for them and us, and especially in a way best suited to act on their dark minds, not given to deductions from reason, but to judging by the senses. We cavil most unreasonably when we do so about the extent or the minuteness of a miracle. Vast or small, both are alike to him, and are as easy also to him as are the operations of what we call natural laws.

CHAPTER XXXV.

TOWARD SINAI.

THAT mysterious leader and guide, the pillar of cloud above their heads, was again in motion. They moved with it; but we are no longer able to trace their course with that distinctness which we have hitherto been able to gain. We are informed of but three stations between this spot by the sea and that at Sinai—namely, at Dophkah, at Alush, and Rephidim;[1] and we know that they were a month in making the journey from this encampment to that mountain:[2] as to the position of those intermediate stations we are left only to conjecture, and have scarcely even the means for that.

The nature of the ground would admit of several routes after leaving the encampment by the sea, namely, along the sandy shore for fifty-five miles to a valley (No. 20 on map), where, turning to the left at nearly a right angle, they would have a shorter distance among the mountains than by any other; or they could turn immediately by Wady Shellal (13), to Wady Mukatteb (14), and so to Feiran; or, at a distance of twenty miles along the shore, then at once into Wady Feiran (15). The second of these is the shortest, and was evidently the most used in the ancient times; for Wady Mukatteb, "Written Valley," takes its name from the great abundance of what are called Sinaitic inscriptions, here crowded on almost every rock, and often at such altitudes as almost to require a ladder to reach them. They commence here, and are thence scattered thickly along Wady Feiran, and, onward, more sparingly to Sinai, and in yet fewer numbers about that mountain.

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[1] Num. xxxiii. 12–14. [2] Compare Ex. xvi. 1 with ib. xix. 1.

The Israelites, it is generally believed, took the route along Wady Feiran either by way of its outlet at the sandy shore, or through Wady Shellal and Mukatteb. If by Mukatteb, they would (supposing the natural scenery to be then as now), soon after entering Wady Feiran, come to a spot "where," says a recent traveller, "at a turn of the road, the scene burst upon us more like the dream of a poet, than any reality in this arid wilderness. The cliffs on either hand still towered bare and perpendicular, to an immense height; but instead of a gravelly valley, collecting and condensing the fiery rays of the sun, arose, as by enchantment, tufted groves of palm and fruit trees, producing on my mind a more vivid impression of romantic luxuriance than had been left by anything I had yet seen in the East."[1] Proceeding onward, this rich vegetation almost ceases; and then at the distance of about a mile, we come upon the greatest of marvels in that country, "a stream of running water purling through an overhanging covert" of trees. "On the edge of this palm-forest," says the same writer, "nature had already prepared a halting-place for the lonely and worn visitor of her most hidden haunts, and among the infinite variety of her fanciful creations, few could be found more wild or marvellous than this. . . . The palms beneath which I encamped were not the solitary ornament of a small oasis; but the outskirts of a dense grove extending for miles up the narrow valley. On stepping out of my tent, I was at once in the midst of an almost tropical wilderness. In the palm-groves of Egypt the stems are trimmed and straight, and placed generally at regular intervals; but here this most graceful of trees is half untended, its boughs spring direct from the earth, and form tufts and avenues and dense overarching thickets of the most luxuriant growth, through which the sunlight falls tremblingly upon the shaded turf.

[1] Bartlett's "*Forty Days.*"

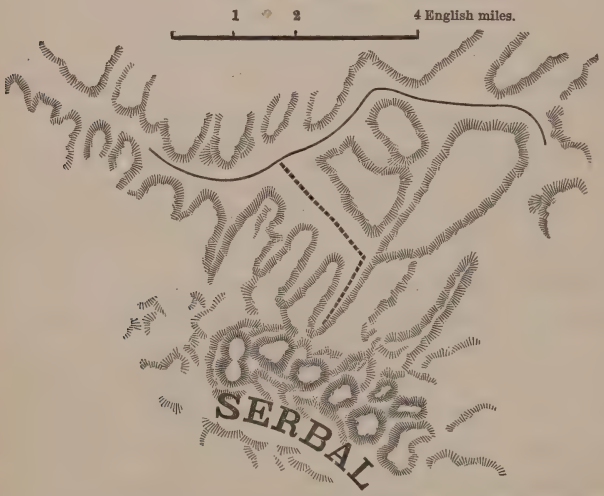
Among them, some few shooting upright, lift high above the rest their lovely coronal of rustling fans and glowing bunches of dates; but the greatest part assume that fantastic variety of form which only untended nature can originate; some, wildly throwing forth their branches, droop to the ground like heavy plumes, laden with a graceful burden of fanlike boughs which almost kiss the turf; others, crossing and intertwined, form mazy alleys of exquisite verdure: the clear stream bubbles freshly on the edge of these arcades, and the deep solitude is vocal with the song of birds; the wind, sweeping down the rocks, plays over the rustling foliage with the gentlest murmur; and, shut in by two lofty walls of rock from the dreary desert without, the traveller, lulled in a dreamy and delicious repose, heightened by his past weariness, forgets a while its perils and privations, and the long distance he has yet to accomplish across its drouthy sands."

This small but beautiful valley bears in it marks of having been a place of some consequence in the ancient times. We find here stone walls, the remains of a city and of a convent and churches, and in the rocks numerous holes either natural or excavated, yet evidently once the abodes of anchorites. From the fourth to the eighth century of our era, Christian residents and pilgrims were sufficiently numerous in this part of Arabia to have a bishop, whose home appears to have been at Pharan (Feiran); and Theodorus of this see made himself famous in two Christian councils, one at Rome, A. D. 649, and the other at Constantinople, A. D. 680. The great abundance of Sinaitic inscriptions about this place also shows how much it was frequented in those early times.

Three miles southward from this fair, gem-like spot of Wady Feiran is Serbal (No. 16), the most northerly of the granitic mountains, and the first of them reached by the Israelites in their journey. There are higher mountains in

the peninsula, but this one, standing so far at one corner of the granitic region and quite distant from all the others, has a very commanding aspect, and always affects the visitor by its majestic grandeur. As stated already it is 6342 feet in height above sea-level: it is terminated above by five or six conical peaks which form a very picturesque outline marked on the sky. All this is very distinct, and as the Israelites came journeying on the huge mass excited the wonder and admiration of every one, even the most obtuse. Massive, yet in its sharp upward peaks airy-like; solemn, yet picturesque; in its singular combination of opposite characteristics, it must have drawn every eye by a peculiar attractiveness.

Map of Mount Serbal and its Vicinity.
(*Copied from Lepsius.*)



The black line represents the present stream in Wady Feiran: the dotted line shows Wady Aleyat, giving the most direct access to Serbal.

Is this the Sinai of the Scriptures? Writers of great eminence, Lepsius among them, contend firmly that it is. Robinson, with others also of authority, holds to the contrary; and the nature of our subject requires that we now examine the

question. Eminent *authorities* and *tradition* also as far as it can be reached, appear to be about equally balanced between this and the other reputed Sinai—the mountain usually called by this latter name. Probably each place will always continue to have its advocates; but if we take literally the requirements in the record of events connected with the giving of the Law, there seems to be scarcely room for doubt: for the latter and the region adjoining answer fully to these requirements, while Serbal and its precincts have no such correspondence, but the contrary.

Every one who, without prejudgment, reads the history of the giving of the Law at Sinai, must conclude that all the multitudes of the Israelites were *near* the mountain, and in a situation to allow them easily to see it; also with ready access to it, and where from it they could be easily reached. Now, Wady Feiran is three miles from the foot of Serbal, and is the only place in this region where the Israelites in a body could have encamped. The mountain is reached with difficulty from Feiran, by a narrow, rough wady, Aleyat, leading to it from the latter; is not seen from Feiran except at a few spots, and there imperfectly, and consequently could not be visible to most of the encampment there; and the grand, solemn impressiveness of the scenes at Sinai would here have been broken up by the difficulties of the intervening and surrounding space. We will quote again from Bartlett, and we do it the more readily because he seems to be very much inclined in favor of Serbal, although his evidence, which is candidly given, must be admitted to be on the other side. He says, speaking of the objection, that "there is no open space in the immediate neighborhood of Serbal suitable for the encampment of the vast multitude, and from which they could *all of them at once* have had a view of the mountain," "is this objection conclusive? We read, indeed, that Israel 'camped *before the mount*,' and that 'the Lord came down in sight of *all the people*;' more-

over, that bounds were set to prevent the people from breaking through and violating even the precincts of the holy solitude. Although *these* conditions are more *literally* fulfilled at er-Rahah, [in front of Sinai], yet if we consider them couched in general terms, they apply, perhaps, well enough to the vicinity of Serbal. A glance at the view and a reference to this small rough map,[1] will show the reader that the main encampment of the host must have been in Wady Feiran itself, from which the summit of the Serbal is only here and there visible, and that it is by the lateral wady, Aleyat, that the base of the mountain itself, by a walk of about an hour, is to be reached. It certainly struck me, in passing up this valley, as a very unfit, if not impracticable, spot for the encampment of any great number of people, if they were all in tents: though well supplied with pure water, the ground is rugged and rocky,—toward the base of the mountain awfully so; but still it is quite possible that a certain number might have established themselves, as the Arabs do at present, while, as on other occasions, the principal masses were distributed in the surrounding valleys. I do not know that there is any adequate ground for believing, as Robinson does, that because the people were warned not to invade the seclusion of the mount, and a guard was placed to prevent them from doing so, that *therefore the encampment itself* pressed closely on its borders. Curiosity might possibly enough lead many to attempt this even from a distance, to say nothing of those already supposed to be located in the Wady Aleyat, near the base of the mountain, to whom the injunction would more immediately apply."

This much for the reasoning of Bartlett in favor of Serbal. Of his visit to that mountain he wrote:

"The path on leaving Wady Feiran follows the Wady Aleyat, and for some distance is tolerably easy, but becomes

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[1] Given in his book: we present a more elaborate one, taken from Lepsius.

gradually more and more rugged as it ascends toward the base of the mountain; yet it was evidently an old way, formerly frequented, as appeared from the ruined buildings, and the Sinaitic characters which we now and then found scratched on any convenient blocks of stones. The bed of this wady, as I have before remarked, is very rugged, and would with difficulty have served as a camping-ground for the Israelites, save on a very limited scale: there are two beautiful springs to relieve its sterility; one was deep below us; but the second, or upper one, lay directly in our course. The foliage, as at Feiran, is exquisitely beautiful around this upper spring; the water welling out from it is colder and purer than that of the stream below: probably a small hermitage or monastic establishment once existed here. Hence the isolated peaks of the Serbal tower up with awful magnificence, and seemingly defy the most adventurous: . . . . all path soon after ceased, and our course hence to the base of the mountain was over a wilderness of loose blocks, which it was no easy matter to cross without slipping, yet we occasionally found the Sinaitic characters inscribed upon them. So rugged was the way that, though but a single hour had elapsed since we left Feiran, I felt almost completely tired when we reached the foot of the conical precipices, which rise sheer and abrupt from this scene of desolation. The only possible means of ascent is up a narrow and almost perpendicular chasm, dividing two of these impracticable peaks, half filled with huge crags fallen from above, and hurled one upon another in the most terrific confusion: to get to the top seemed to me impossible; the guide, however, assured us there was no difficulty: with this we began to scramble up the chasm: . . . to myself, the clamber, though I had practised pretty well among the Alps, seemed so desperately toilsome, and so increasingly dangerous as we advanced, that but for the resolution of Komeh [the guide], who seemed determined to have me to

the summit, I should have flinched and gone back again. We were exposed to the fierce sunbeams of an Arabian noon; there were no steps to assist us, and hardly the faintest trace of a path, though one had evidently formerly existed; we had besides to climb up on our hands and knees great part of the way, in imminent peril of slipping down the polished surface of the fallen crags which we were surmounting, and of being dashed to pieces among those below. The fatigue of thus trailing like serpents up the face of the ascent was excessive; the higher we mounted, the more terrifically the mountain seemed to rear itself above, and if getting up seemed barely possible, descending again seemed perfectly hopeless. At length, after spending about three hours in this manner, we reached the summit, consisting of round, smooth masses of granite, which it required the greatest attention to get over without slipping. Trembling in every nerve with the violent exertion, we sat down under a huge block surmounting one of those conical peaks, which at a distance had seemed to me utterly inaccessible to all but the eagle and the gazelle."

The descent occupied "nearly as long as the climb;" Lepsius was two hours and a half descending;—"the path," he says, "the most difficult and most fatiguing I ever trod in the whole course of my life."

The reader will scarcely feel that it is necessary, after this, to place before him any argument in refutation of the claims of this mountain to be the Sinai of the Scriptures, one so far off, and reached with such difficulty from the general encampment, at which its summit would be only here and there visible, especially as the precincts of the other mountain, to which we shall soon conduct the reader, correspond to all the requisites of the Bible narrative in the delivery of the Law. It is true that the Wady Feiran is a most attractive spot, and the neighborhood of its rival is bare and dreary; but the transactions at Sinai had a simple

and stern and solemn grandeur better suited to a place where nature, in the same stern simplicity, could leave the mind, unembarrassed by other thoughts, free to appreciate the majesty of the presence of God.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

REPHIDIM—A BATTLE.

THE great hosts of Israel probably remained a considerable time in this beautiful Wady Feiran; for they were more than two months in getting from Egypt to Sinai,[1] and the journey up to the time when they had received the manna, near to Feiran, had been a rapid one. Consequently after that event, onward to Sinai, their journey was marked by considerable delays. It is likely that their protracted occupancy of this spot, so choice amid the general dreariness, gave that offence to the Amalekites which brought on the fight with this people, which we shall presently detail.

There are only three stations mentioned in the Bible as occurring between the "Wilderness of Sin" and Sinai; but critics appear to be agreed that these are only the principal stopping-places, and do not designate the full number of encampments on the way.

After leaving Feiran, the road might lead by a succession of wadys, and then finally across a narrow and very difficult pass to the front of Sinai, or it might conduct them to the same spot by the large wady Sheikh (No. 17 on the map), which curves round by the northward, and after nearly a semi-circular course, finally opens out on the large

[1] Ex. xix. 1.

plain in front of Sinai. It is probable that they took the latter more easy route; and Robinson supposes that it was in this wady, at a place where, after having for a while left the granite for the sandstone region, it again enters among the gloomy, granitic precipices, that Rephidim (18?) is to be sought.

Rephidim is a spot made famous in this journey by the murmurings of the people for water, and their insolence to Moses, toward whom they were, indeed, near offering personal violence. It is probable that they left with great reluctance the full stream and the verdure at Feiran; and by their indulgence there, found the hardship all the greater now when, at their encampment at Rephidim, no water was to be had. The cloud had moved, and they had followed its moving: but the journey was with a predisposition to censoriousness and angry complaint. Indeed, they were beginning to have obdurate hearts even with regard to Jehovah himself. Night after night, the manna had descended and they had received bread "to the full:" but this supply had continued now a month, and had got to be almost like what we call "a law of nature;" for it was as regular and seemingly as natural as the fall of dew. What comes regularly even as a free gift, we soon begin to regard as our right, forgetting the giver; and so the manna was itself ceasing to bring forth expressions of gratitude. A spirit of insolence was beginning to grow up in the people. Only two months had elapsed since they had been slaves; and in that short period they had advanced, first through the joy of deliverance, then through triumph over their enemies, then into a miraculous sustenance; and now they were already becoming proud and presumptuous. Water was wanting in Rephidim. At Marah, under similar suffering, even after three days' deprivation, they had simply asked of Moses, "What shall we drink?" but here at Rephidim. they came boldly up to him and said, "Give us

water that we may drink," using other insolent words. His patience is admirable: "Why chide ye with me?" he said; "wherefore do ye tempt the Lord?" "Wherefore," cried some of them, "is this, that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?" *And they were near stoning him.* He cried to God; and his cry was now almost one of despair with regard to his countrymen; for it was not for help, which he knew would come, but, "What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me." Indeed, they were insolent toward heaven, for they were saying to each other, "Is the Lord among us or not?"

He was directed by the divine authority to call the elders of the people, and then taking these, to go with them before the angry, scowling multitudes; and with the rod which he had stretched over the Red Sea for their deliverance, he was to strike a rock, and was assured that water should flow out. He did so: water burst forth in such abundance as to satisfy their thirst. He named the place *Massah*, "Temptation," and *Meribah*, "Chiding." The names were to be a memorial, while they remained there, of their insolence.

But a lesson was to be given them in order to repress their presumption and to show them how necessary their great leader—greatest always in his patience—was to their safety. Word was here brought in that the stragglers in the rear, the faint and weary and feeble and the careless laggards, were set upon by an enemy, the Amalekites, who were putting them to death. These Amalekites were a nomadic tribe, occupying this part of Arabia and the region lying northwardly toward Canaan; and they now looked with the keenest alarm on the invasion of their territory by such an immense multitude, of whose purposes they could not form any surmise. Probably they had retired before the great host from their favorite valley of Feiran; but they now hung upon their outskirts, as they were retiring,

and with results of which Moses was at once informed. He sent for Joshua,[1] the leader elect of the Israelitish fighting men, and told him to choose out soldiers and to take them on the morrow to give battle with the Amalekites, while he himself would stand in a conspicuous place with the rod in his hand. Accordingly the next day, Moses and Aaron and Hur (another chosen friend), repaired to the top of an adjoining hill, while Joshua and his band made an attack on the enemy. It was felt by all the Israelites to be a time decisive of their future position in this country, perhaps of their safety and lives: and they gazed on the three men on the eminence—the rod uplifted, and heard the sounds of battle, and soon were informed also that, while the rod was held up, their soldiers were victorious, but when from fatigue it was lowered, the enemy were prevailing. Aaron and Hur lent their assistance in sustaining the arms of Moses; and so through the rest of the day success was with the Israelite combatants, till at its close the enemy were thoroughly routed and put to flight.

Moses was afterward directed from heaven to make a written[2] record of this attack by the Amalekites, which record was to be afterward brought to the notice of Joshua, who was to take vengeance on this people in future times. An altar was built here, and called *Jehovah-nissi*, "Jehovah my banner," metaphorically *my sign*,[3] for it was to

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[1] This is the first notice of this general, who finally was so conspicuous in the biblical record. His character, as it becomes afterward developed, shows him to have been worthy of the important trusts committed to him by the great leader. His name was at first Oshea and Jehoshua (Num. xiii. 8, 16): then Joshua; all of them signifying *saviour, deliverer*. In the New Testament he is called Jesus (Acts vii. 45; Heb. iv. 8). This is his name also in the Septuagint.

[2] This is the first time that *writing* is distinctly noticed in the Scriptures, but the passage shows that such mode of communicating thought was well known among the people.

[3] This is the meaning of the word in Num. xxvi. 10.

be a remembrancer of the destruction which was to be brought upon Amalek. The fight had doubtless not been a regular one as by soldiers in battle array, but conducted in the nomadic method by swift onsets and retreats and onsets again, in a scattering manner. It was, however, an eventful one to the Israelites, for it settled for the present the question of their superiority, and kept them from further assaults of this description. Among themselves also it strengthened Moses in his position as leader: here, as at the Red Sea, their deliverance had been through his signal act.

Not long afterward it was announced to him, one day, that a party of natives of another description were at the outskirts of his camp. These consisted of Jethro, his father-in-law, accompanied by the wife and two sons of Moses, probably also by attendants from the tribe. In the suspicious state of feeling and the excitement in the vast encampment, it would have been dangerous to venture in, and they remained at a short distance without; and there, soon, a very joyful meeting took place. We can see the aged sheikh standing before the Israelite hosts in the dignity of the free Arab life; we see their great leader bowing in obeisance before him, and then, as they do now, kissing him on both cheeks with the half embrace; and then the salutations with the wife and sons. We remember that he had sent these latter back, when on his way to meet the dangers of delivering his people from Egypt: now they could be with him, and give him the cheering relief of their society again. Jethro, on being informed of what had occurred in Egypt, blessed God in words that show the devoutness of his heart; and having offered burnt-offerings and sacrifices to God, next made a feast for the elders of the Israelite camp.

But the leader of this immense host had little time allowed him for social enjoyments. The host was a great medley of all kinds of people and all kinds of conflicting

interests; and the multitudes crowded to him to settle their difficulties. He had allowed them to come; for it gave him opportunities of informing their minds, for as he said, "I do make them know the statutes of God and his laws." But Jethro saw that, however commendable was the motive of tenderness to them and of kindness in communicating knowledge, the labor was too much for one man, and that he was wearing his life out in the effort. The more prudent sheikh advised him to select proper persons, and put them as rulers over thousands, also inferior ones over hundreds, and then again others over tens: and the rule in such selection is one that should be written before all nations as their guide: they were to be "*such as fear God, men of truth and hating covetousness.*" The highest and most difficult cases for adjudication were to be brought before Moses, who was to be "for the people," said Jethro, "to God-ward, that thou mayest bring the causes unto God." The advice was followed, and not only was Moses relieved of a too heavy burden of duty, but also the vast multitudes were brought more into system; and a degree of regularity began to establish itself. It was a good preparation for greater events now about to ensue.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

SINAI.

"AND they departed from Rephidim and pitched in the wilderness of Sinai:" "and there Israel encamped before the mount."[1]

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[1] Num. xxxiii. 15; Ex. xix. 2.

We are now coming to events the most stupendous in their physical aspects that the world has ever known; and in order to prepare for them we will endeavor to have a clear and distinct idea of the region in which they transpired,—Mount Sinai, with the adjacent ground.

The reader is here presented with a carefully made copy of a photograph of that mountain, recently taken in the best style of the invaluable art of sun-painting; and this with the accompanying reliable map, will give him the means of comprehending the following descriptions. In addition to what has already been said respecting the want of adaptation in the grounds about Serbal to the requirements in Scripture history, it is as well to say that there is no other spot than this of Sinai known in the peninsula where the mountain and adjoining grounds do answer to such requirements. It appears therefore that adding to this fact the old traditions respecting the place, we need have no hesitation in speaking of the place before us as the scene of the wonderful event now to be noticed,—an event transcended in importance and moral grandeur by only one other on our globe,—the Crucifixion at Calvary.

This mountain, which we shall therefore call Sinai,[1] is

[1] The mountain is first mentioned only as *Horeb* in Ex. iii. 1; then also in Ex. xvii. 6; and the same is necessarily implied in Ex. iii. 12; iv. 28; xvii. 5. The name Sinai is first used Ex. xix. 1, 2, where the Israelites are said to have departed from Rephidim, and come to the "desert of Sinai." From this time, with one exception (Ex. xxxiii. 6), during their whole sojourn in the vicinity, Sinai alone is spoken of: Ex. xix. 11, 18, 23; xxiv. 16; xxxi. 18; xxxiv. 29, 32; Lev. vii. 38; xxv. 1; xxvi. 46; xxvii. 34; Num. i. 1; iii. 1, 14. In Num. x. 12, they break up from Sinai; and in the list of stations, Num. xxxiii. 15, Sinai also naturally appears. But, elsewhere, after their departure, and through the whole book of Deuteronomy (except in the song of Moses xxxiii. 2), *Horeb* alone is named; and the same events are spoken of as occurring on Horeb which were before described as taking place on Sinai; Deut. i. 2, 6, 19; iv. 10, 15; v. 2; ix. 8; xxix. 1. Later sacred writers employ both names, until "in the New Testament, Sinai alone is read." Some writers, apparently on

about three miles in length, and like the other mountains of the peninsula stands disjointed and single, though closely

Map of Mount Sinai and its vicinity.

A, The part of the mountain called by the Arabs Jebel Sooksafeh: B, The part called Jebel Mûsa: C, Position of the present convent: D, Wady Sheikh: E, Plain of er-Rahah. From C, a slanting and not difficult road leads up to the central part of the summit. Jebel Sooksafeh is the front presented in the accompanying picture: its summit can be reached either by the slanting but circuitous road from C, or, with more difficulty, directly in front.

justifiable grounds, consider the whole mountain as meant by the term *Horeb*, and the lofty bluff at its northern end, overlooking the plain, as *Sinai*.

MOUNT SINAI, viewed from the North and across the Plain er-Rahah.
(*Copied carefully from a Photograph; the monastery being omitted.*)

surrounded by mountains of a similar kind. The traveller, coming from the northward, and surmounting one of the lowermost of these adjoining eminences, will suddenly have before him a plain twenty-seven hundred feet wide, now called er-Rahah; and will see at its opposite side, rising sheer from the edge of the plain to the height of about fourteen hundred feet, a bare, black mountain, set among other mountains, but the most impressive among them all in consequence of its broad massiveness of almost perpendicular front and a seeming greater majesty in its solid, compact, firm strength; as if it were indeed made, and placed there, to sustain in its singleness, the mightiness of Jehovah's evident presence in his most astounding visitation to man. No one can look on it, and on the large plain spread out below,—the latter a unique instance among these rugged, crowded mountains,—without feeling that a preparation has seemingly been made here for something wonderful, and grand as wonderful; and the heart is prepared for all that impressiveness, that overwhelming greatness of glory, and that terrific grandeur, which we know were here once exhibited and felt by the cowering millions of Israelites spread over this plain below.

The map will show the reader that several wadys here unite, and that the one called Wady Sheikh is an an unusually wide one; and thus a plain is formed, of which Robinson says: "We may fairly estimate the whole plain at two geographical miles long and ranging in breadth from one to two-thirds of a mile; or it is equivalent to a surface of at least one square mile. This space is nearly doubled by a recess on the west and by the broad and level area of Wady Sheikh on the east, which issues at right angles to the plain, and is equally in view of the front and summit of the present Horeb [Sinai]. . . . The encampment before the mountain must not improbably include only the headquarters of Moses and the elders, and of a portion of the

people; the whole remainder, with their flocks were scattered among the adjacent valleys."

The mountain is a distinct mass of dark granite, and has on its east the narrow Wady Shubeib, in which is the present convent (marked C on the map: its place is designated by a tree on the left hand of the mountain in the view). On the west is Wady el-Leja, beyond which westwardly is Jebel Hûm, terminated at the southern end by Jebel Catherin, the highest peak in this neighborhood.[1]

At the convent a path commences and leads slantingly, by no very difficult ascent, to the top of the mountain; and the traveller, having gained this summit, will find before him a small plain sprinkled over with grass and shrubs. This is near the central part of the ridge; and from it an easy ascent southwardly conducts to what is called Jebel Mûsa, or Mount of Moses, the highest part of the mountain, which is at its southern end. It is a rounded peak, having an elevation of 7217 feet above the level of the sea. The name of this loftiest portion indicates the nature of the prevailing belief, both among the Arabs and the monks of the convent below, that this is the spot where the Law-giving occurred; but this idea is rejected by both Robinson and Olin, on the ground that its peak is hidden from the plain by the intervening northern summits. Robinson says, "No part of the plain is visible from the summit [Jebel Mûsa], nor are the bottoms of the adjacent valleys; nor is any spot to be seen around it where the people could have been assembled." After visiting Jebel Mûsa, and finding it so little in accordance with the requirements of the historic events, Dr. Robinson and his companion determined on exploring the northern end of the mountain (the one presented in our picture), with which no one of their monkish

[1] The highest mountains of the peninsula are, in English feet, above the sea level—Shaumer, 8238; Catharin, 8272; Jebel Mûsa, 7217; Serbal, 6506, or 6342 French feet.

or Arab attendants seemed to have any minute acquaintance, and which they had to explore without assistance from others. Commencing at the plain already noticed, midway along on the summit, and proceeding toward the north, they came to a steep ascent; then to a small basin; then to two more similar ascents and basins; and then to a cliff rising about five hundred feet, its highest part about half a mile distant. They could not climb its sides in a direct course, as these were too smooth and precipitous; but they went up by a ravine, and reached the summit. He says there "The extreme difficulty of the ascent was well rewarded by the prospect that now opened upon us. The whole plain of er-Rahah lay spread out beneath our feet, with the adjacent wadys and mountains; while Wady esh-Sheikh on the right and the recess on the left, both connected with, and opening broadly from, er-Rahah, presented an area which serves nearly to double that of the plain."

"Our conviction," he adds, "was strengthened, that here, or on some one of the adjacent cliffs, was the spot where the Lord 'descended in fire' and proclaimed the Law. Here lay the plain where the whole congregation might be assembled; here was the mount that could be approached and touched, if not forbidden; and here the mountain brow, where alone the lightnings and the thick cloud would be visible, and the thunders and the voice of the trump be heard, when the Lord 'came down in the sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai!'"

Rev. Dr. Olin, who had ascended Jebel Mûsa by the usual route, and was also dissatisfied with the result of this visit, determined, in company with a friend, to attempt the direct ascent from er-Rahah to the summit, that is, up the front here presented in the picture. The Arabs, he says, call that northern peak, Sooksafe; and he adds, "Jebel Sooksafe rises from a broad and spreading base into several high and almost perpendicular peaks. It has an aspect of

awful and imposing grandeur, and though inferior to the neighboring summit [Jebel Mûsa] in elevation, far surpasses it in effect." His journal proceeds—

"March 16th [1840], I spent this day in exploring the summit at the southern extremity of Jebel Mousa [Mûsa], the Sooksafe of the Bedouins. It was an excursion of much interest, but involving great fatigue and anxiety. I left the convent with Mr. C., by the passage leading into the garden, about 9 A. M. . . . We proceeded along the narrow valley [Wady Shubeib] to Wady el Raha [er-Raha], and turning to the west, were soon at the base of Sooksafe. We commenced our ascent along the western side of a low granite ridge, which runs in the proper direction, and found ourselves in due time upon the summit of which this is the base. At first we walked upon fragments of stone that had fallen from the regions above; but soon reached the solid bare rock, of which the mountain is chiefly composed, over which we pursued the largest part of our way to the top. It is slightly disintegrated, presenting a rough surface, which greatly diminished the danger of slipping. A second elevation of a steeper and more laborious ascent was now before us. There were no less than four of these cliffs, each of which would, in other localities, be regarded as lofty, standing nearly in a right line with the object of our toil, and forming so many stages of the ascent. The second presented no serious obstacle to our advance, and was soon surmounted. The next was steeper, and the surface of the rock, possessing greater solidity than the masses below, was too smooth to afford a good foothold; and as the slope near the summit became very steep, our progress was difficult and fatiguing. We were induced by the imposing appearance below us to descend into a narrow gorge lying directly between the last of the minor elevations and the towering form of Jebel Sooksafe, which offered to our view an immense, solid mass of rock, rising to the height of several

hundred feet, and absolutely perpendicular. We hoped, however, to discover some less forbidding prospect, by passing around its base to the eastern or southern side. Our ascent up the ravine was facilitated by a great number of rocks and fragments of granite, which had fallen from the heights above and lodged in the channel. They formed, in several places, laborious and steep stairs. Before reaching the front, where we had hoped to find some practicable slope by which we might be able to ascend the threatening mountain that overhung us, our passage was suddenly stopped by a yawning precipice. At the bottom, which appeared to be two hundred feet below us, was a narrow vale enclosed by precipitous rocks of great height, and covered with shrubs. Some deep gorge, concealed from our view, probably extended from this to one of the valleys below. Our hopes of success on this side at least, were blasted. . . . We found, however, on further examination, a part of the cliff where we could commence the ascent, though it appeared to become impracticable at a higher elevation. The attempt succeeded beyond my expectations. The narrow bed of a decomposed vein of porphyry offered us at first an unexpected facility. When this failed, we succeeded in pulling ourselves up the no longer perpendicular mass by means of small cavities in its surface, such as I have already described. The slope now became so gentle that we could creep along on our hands and feet, though a miss-step must have been fatal. [They soon after exulted in the accomplishment of their object.]

"The summit of Sooksafe, which seen from the Wady el-Raha, seems but a point, spreads out into a level area of considerable extent, composed of dark gray, sunburnt granite. The view from this point is little inferior to that from Sinai [Jebel Mûsa], and embraces nearly the same region. I was most gratified to find that it perfectly commands the plain of el Raha, and that every object of suffi-

cient magnitude, and every transaction upon its summit, must have been seen by the encamped Israelites. There are two other summits on this end of the mountain, rather more lofty than these, within the distance of half a mile or a little more. I ascended them, to see whether they had any claim to the honor which I had already awarded to the first. I was soon satisfied that they had not. Only a small part of the plain was visible from them."

The reader has now perhaps a pretty correct idea of this spot, so fitted to be the scene of most wonderful and sublime events. The feeling that most impresses itself upon travellers amongst these mountains, even apart from all historic associations, is *solemnity*. These great, distinct elevations, though often rough and jagged, are all massive, and are marked with the impressive grandeur of seeming eternal endurance and majesty. There is also such a depth of repose, as if eternal silence, on peak above or in vale below, held jealous dominion, not allowing even the whisperings of a breeze to break its continuity.

But, even at this day, that silence is sometimes broken so wonderfully and grandly that it seems as if God might even yet be there, speaking in a manner to be recognized by our ear. The mountains are so packed together in close proximity, yet with deep precipitous valleys between; there is such a vast number of them, all distinct, all solid and massive; and they are so bare and thus so fitted for reverberations, that a peal of thunder among them is the grandest of all earthly sounds.

If the reader of this has ever been at our national Military Academy amid the depths of the Highlands, when its heavy guns have been fired, he will remember well the returned roar from all the surrounding crags; and how the sound went leaping from peak to peak, and was sent back, now in a faint echo, and then again in a multitude as of great explosions, and then faintly again, and was caught up

and carried far off, whence it spake back in expiring murmurs or in one last echo all by itself. What then must be the effect of thunder among the naked peaks of this peninsula of Sinai! And we must try to imagine it before we can have an idea of the scenes at the giving by Jehovah of his Law; for that, we know, was with "thunders and lightnings." A thunder storm there has been described by a traveller, Dr. Stewart; but the description, though graphic, still must fall greatly below the reality, for what description can reach the power of such an effect? He says, "Every bolt, as it burst with the roar of a cannon, seemed to awaken a series of distinct echoes on every side. . . . . They swept like a whirlwind among the higher mountains, becoming faint as some mighty peak intervened, and bursting with undiminished volume through some yawning cleft, till the very ground trembled with the concussion. It seemed as if the mountains of the whole peninsula were answering one another in a chorus of the deepest bass. Ever and anon a flash of lightning dispelled the pitchy darkness and lit up the mountain as if it had been day; then, after the interval of a few seconds, came a peal of thunder, bursting like a shell, to scatter its echoes to the four quarters of the heavens, and overpowering for a moment the loud howling of the wind."[1]

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE DECALOGUE.

WE accompany now the vast multitudes of the Israelites, as coming either by Wady Sheikh or by the shorter and rougher way of Nŭkb Hâwy ("Windy Pass"), over

[1] "Tent and Khan."

the hill at the north they finally debouched out upon the plain of er-Rahah; and on it and on the gentler elevations adjoining, soon had their encampment formed. It was, indeed, a vast and most interesting, moving panorama,—this company of two or three millions of persons, with their flocks and herds; while above them rested that mysterious pillar of the cloud,—now to remain there stationary for nearly a year.

A strange mystery, indeed, there was in all things connected with this people. At night that mysterious pillar of fire was still to give its light; and through all the silent hours to the breaking of day, was to come down upon them that mysterious food of manna, the quiet token of God's constant, providing care.

But God was about to speak to them here in audible tones. Hitherto his communications had been to Moses and Aaron; or, far back in their history, to Abraham and their other patriarchs. But there was now a vast work to be done,—that of elevating a whole nation rapidly to a knowledge of him;—of educating an immense multitude into the highest science, the science of knowing and understanding God. Who was to teach? How was the teaching to be brought within the comprehension of such an ignorant, debased multitude, and to be impressed indelibly upon their minds and hearts? There were no books for the multitude; few persons that could inform them orally; and the oral, and, indeed, any other lessons, on such an obtuse and capricious people would have little permanent effect. How then teach and enlighten them, and how mould them rightly now, at the very beginning, when they could yet be moulded at all? It must be done soon. God was now going to write the lesson for them on the sky here at Sinai, and to flash it before their eyes; and his thunders were to be his voice sounding in their ears. What he had before spoken to the patriarchs, and to Moses and Aaron singly, he was

here to speak to the whole nation. They were all to be taught, and were afterward to be a demonstration of him and for him, before the world for all future history;—God in history, a volume that the world might read. For this he had brought them to Sinai. Therefore the cloud now rested there.

That mountain, so silent now, so rough in crag and pinnacle, and so weathered by many ages of heat and storm, has yet a majesty unrivalled on our globe; and as in our thoughts we gaze at it, the old scenes recorded of it, all so terrific when the loud thunder caught from its summit reverberated from the thousand peaks of mountains scattered far and wide, and the lightnings flashed, and supernatural sounds in the intervals of the thunder filled the air,—all seem to come before us; and we seem to hear God still speaking there amid that solemn and dread awfulness of his presence.

The encampment had been formed. Far and wide over the plain, and along the wadys opening into it, was the vast city of tents. The people were scattered about in the various occupations attendant on a new nomadic home; some were seeking in the neighborhood such spots of pasturage as it would afford; some were gazing in wonder, and with a feeling of awe, upon the bare dark heights that rose in such rugged majesty over their heads. The elders, so lately constituted into a body of judges for the people, were organizing for the great task before them;—for these millions of the suddenly aggregated and loosely cohering nation would give ample employment to such courts.

Soon after the arrival at this place, Moses was summoned by the Deity to ascend the mountain. He may, in his visits to its heights, have gone by the easier ascent along its sides, or by a way less difficult than is yet known to us, up its front.

Far up, on those solitary heights, God spoke to him. The scene was in accordance with the words. All around

was a world of mountains outspread, peak after peak near and far away. Below were the encamped multitudes. The words to Moses were,

"Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: Ye have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you unto myself. Now, therefore, if ye will obey my voice, indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: and ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation."

He came down, and having assembled the elders,[1] delivered the message, which was then communicated generally, the people answering to it, "All that the Lord hath spoken we will do."

Again Moses ascended; and now he was commanded to go down and to charge the people to be prepared, on the third day from that, to appear in clean garments and with pure hearts, to stand before God, who would then "come down in the sight of all the people upon Mount Sinai." He was also to have bounds prepared around the mountain; for neither man nor beast was to touch it: if they did so, it was to be at the peril of life. When the trumpet sounded they were to approach near to the mount.

The preparations were made according to this command.

The expectations of the people took every possible form; but in every case they were raised to the highest degree. The minds of the most obtuse among them were beginning to have glimmerings of God, but still in the degree of general ignorance, their surmisings of what was now to come took fantastic, and often degraded shapes.

But as, on the morning of the third day, all stood gazing toward the mountain, a thick cloud began to cover it. This

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[1] Probably the heads of tribes.

increased in thickness and darkness; its black billowy forms rising and surging with tumultuous motion, while the solid earth shook and trembled as if with a convulsion that threatened destruction there and all around. Lightnings flashed from the cloud, and thunders pealed startling reverberations from multitudinous peaks far and near. "And Mount Sinai was altogether on a smoke because the Lord descended upon it in fire: and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly." At intervals in the lulls of the reverberations from the thunder, were sounds as of a trumpet, raised louder and louder, till it seemed to take almost the force of the thunder itself.

The people stood trembling, gazing in awe at the fearfulness of this manifestation of God's presence, a deep reverence filling their souls. It was a demonstration of the might and majesty of God suited well to their intellects.

"And the Lord came down upon Mount Sinai, on the top of the mount."

Moses was called up, and was charged once more to go and see that the bounds were kept in order and the sanctity of the mountain observed; after which he and Aaron were to go upward toward its summit.

This was done; and then was delivered to them the set of laws which we call the Decalogue, beginning with that firm, clear, decisive command to man's soul,

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

The two men were above, veiled in that thick cloud and receiving those ten commandments which ever since have been a received rule for the world. The people below had shrunk away from about the mountain in awe and fear. The scene had overwhelmed them with its terrific majesty. They felt indeed that God was there; and when the Law was brought down to them, they knew that it was his. The words were strong and decisive, and were to last to the end

of time; the demonstration accompanying them was equally strong.

When Moses and Aaron after their descent approached the people, the multitudes cried out to them,

"Speak thou with us, and we will hear: but let not God speak with us, lest we die." The leader answered,

"Fear not: for God is come to prove you, and that his fear may be before your faces, that ye sin not."

The remainder, however, still crowded together in the distance, cowering and gazing in terror at the stupendous scene, while their leader ascended again and entered "the thick darkness, where God was."

CHAPTER XXXIX.

AT SINAI.

THE encampment remained at this place nearly a year;[1] and here, at various times and under varied circumstances, the whole law for the government of the nation was written out. The people were becoming gradually improved in mind and character, but it is not in one year, or indeed in any short series of years, that a nation brought from their condition in Egypt can be reformed. They were now still a base people, with crude intellects; and we have very soon a proof of the latent corruptions brought from their former home and servitude, and ready on all occasions to break out into action.

Moses and Aaron and Nadab and Abihu and seventy of the elders, were called up to the mountain summit, and

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[1] Compare Num. x. 11, with Ex. xix. 1.

there received manifestations of God, adapted to deepen the impressions of his greatness and glory; and then Moses and "his minister Joshua" were summoned to an especial communication at the same place. The Decalogue was to be delivered inscribed on two tables of stone, and also other laws were to be given; and as the time of absence would be a long one, the leader had deputed his authority for that interval to Aaron and Hur, assisted by the elders, with the injunction, "Tarry ye here for us, until we come again unto you."

The two remained on the mountain forty days and nights, during which time many laws were given to the leader alone; among them one relating to "a sanctuary" which was to be prepared, in which God might show his especial presence in the future onward movements of the Israelites. Commandments were also given respecting the consecration of Aaron and his sons to the priests' office, and to administrations at the sanctuary, when it should be ready. Finally, there was delivered to Moses "the testimony, or Ten Commandments," written out on both sides of two tables of stone.

Then he was warned to hasten back to the camp; for the people, he was informed, had "corrupted themselves," and had turned already to the heathen worship. God said to him, "Let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation." But Moses cried, "Wherefore should the Egyptians speak and say, For mischief did he bring them out, to slay them in the mountains, and to consume them from the face of the earth?" and he begged that the people for whom God had so signally manifested himself might be spared.

He rejoined Joshua; and as on their hurried way down, their ears caught sound of noises in the camp, the warrior-instincts of the latter suggested an attack by enemies:

"There is a noise of war in the camp." But Moses answered, "It is not the voice of them that shout for mastery, neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome: but the noise of them that sing do I hear."

A very harrowing spectacle indeed met the eyes of the two men, as they came within sight of the camp. They saw a molten image of a calf: in a position to indicate that it had been worshipped, and before it the people were now engaged with music in sacred dances! It was all one scene of disgusting heathenism with the mirth used before heathen idols, and an approach to heathen obscenity in the idol-worship, for the Jewish men were quite divested of their garments.

Moses in his excited feeling dashed down the stone tables: for he felt to the depths of his soul that such a people were unworthy of any testimony from God; and the tables were broken. He summoned Aaron, and demanded of him an account of this disgusting spectacle. The great Lawgiver's rage was hot,—as it might well be, and his guilty brother cowered before him. The account which the latter gave was this:—that the people, alarmed at the protracted absence of Moses and Joshua, had at last come to him with the demand, "Make us gods which shall go before us: for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him." He had then told them to collect the golden ear-rings among the people, and bring the gold to him: "then I cast it into the fire, and there came out this calf." His account was disingenuous; for he omitted to state that he had "fashioned it with a graving tool," after it had been cast; and that as they had cried before it, "These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt," he himself had built an altar before it, and had made proclamation, "To-morrow is a feast to the Lord," which feast they were now holding before the image.

Moses might well, indeed, be aghast at this intelligence; for here was the heathen worship of Egypt, to draw them from which, as well as to make them a people sacred to God, they had been brought from that country by such miraculous interpositions. At Memphis, the great object of worship was the bull, their god *Apis;* at On, adjoining to Goshen, it was the calf *Mnevis:* at the first trial of their faith, they had plunged directly back again into the worship of this calf. Reform among such a depraved, thankless, perverse people, seemed to be indeed a desperate undertaking. Their leader determined at once on making a terrible example, such as would be well remembered through all their future. He cried out, on seeing the shameless exposure of the Israelite men, "Who is on the Lord's side, let him come unto me?" There might well be fear that none would come; but the sons of Levi ranged themselves with him in a body. He commanded them in the name of "the Lord God of Israel," to take their swords and slay from one end of the camp to the other. They did so, and "there fell of the people that day, about three thousand men." He called upon the people then for a new consecration of themselves to God. A deep awe, and fear, and horror mingled themselves, in all the company, with this effort at a new consecration. He also had the golden calf ground into dust and in this condition mingled with water; and he made them drink of it.

On the morrow he addressed them. "Ye have sinned a great sin: and now I will go up unto the Lord; peradventure I shall make an atonement for your sin." He went, and in the acknowledgment before God, he said, "Yet now, if thou wilt, forgive their sin: and if not, blot me I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written." God had before offered to blot them out and to produce a great nation from him; but the magnanimous leader wished to live or to die *with them.* The people gathered up and buried

their dead in much sadness. In addition to the loss of friends, an issue had been made between them and their great leader, and they felt the justice of his anger. God also showed his own displeasure of their act by afflicting them with a plague.

Another grief there was to them, in seeing Moses now remove his own tent[1] to a spot without the camp, "afar off from the camp." God was going to make himself manifest at it, but not among such a people; and the rebuke was felt when, after this chief tent had been thus removed, they saw the cloud descend and envelop it, showing that the special *Presence* was now there. Sore at heart on account of the slain; self-condemned, and ashamed; grieved at this rebuke by the removal of the tent; and awestruck at seeing the cloud descend, a witness of the mighty Majesty at their side, they "rose up and worshipped, every man at his tent door." The great leader had in this tent many communications with Heaven: he did not reside in it, however, but there received those of the congregation who "sought the Lord." Joshua had charge of it in the absence of his chief.

Moses was now directed to prepare two tables of stone[2]

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[1] This, although called *Tabernacle* in our version, was evidently not the great Tabernacle, which was not erected till some time subsequently: the original is אהל tent: for the great Tabernacle we have משכן, Ex. xl. 17, 18: in v. 19, he spread abroad אהל over the משכן, as if אהל meant cloth only.

[2] What kind of stone? Robinson, when travelling toward Sinai, passed when near Wady Wardân, among limestone hills, "some of them exhibiting an abundance of crystallized sulphate of lime." This was, in a straight line, ninety-one English miles from Sinai: but the southern point of the Tih range, which is also limestone and in which the sulphate of lime is probably to be found, is only twenty-five miles distant. No better substance for such inscription can be found, for its surface is perfectly smooth, it is compact and it can be easily inscribed on by steel or a piece of sharp flint. The Decalogue might be easily inscribed on two such plates as this, each no larger than a common-sized octavo page: for the character which was probably used, see pages 121 and 124 of this book.

like the first, and to take them with him to the summit of Sinai, where "the testimony" or Decalogue was to be written on them as it had been on the broken tables. No man was to go up with him, nor were the flocks and herds to be allowed to feed before the mountain: it was to be again a sanctified spot. He obeyed the command, and "the Lord descended in the cloud." The Deity proclaimed himself there, and "Moses made haste and bowed his head toward the earth and worshipped." He received other commandments there, and was now again forty days and nights, miraculously sustained. He wrote also "upon the tables the words of the covenant, the ten commandments."

Forty days in *such* communion! The sun shining upon our earth brightens it and spreads over it a reflex of its own glory: in that long time on Sinai, the face of Moses became the reflex of God's especial presence; nor did the brightness cease when he descended from the mountain: for his face, without his knowledge, shone with a strange, unearthly brightness amazing to every beholder. Aaron himself, as well as all the people, shrunk from him; for the brightness was dazzling, and it looked as if he was not a human being but some heavenly visitant: as if in those forty days, death had taken him, and now a spirit in his form had descended from that mount. And doubtless there is actually but a very thin veil between the earthly and the heavenly, one which our grosser senses are but seldom allowed to penetrate, but through which they do sometimes catch glimpses of the upper glory. When the Christian Stephen stood, many years after this, before the council at Jerusalem, an advocate for Christ, "all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel:" and after his defence, "he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold I see the heavens opened,

and the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God." Cases sometimes still occur when in individuals at the verge of death, the soul about to spring into the glory of heaven catches glimpses of the glory, and the face, though yet human, shows a reflex of that brightness, while the eye beams as with a spiritual light and the tongue, in its last accents, tells of heaven already seen and known.[1]

Moses called the frightened, shrinking individuals back to him, and they saw that it was not a spirit, but himself, though with a wonderful illumination upon his features. Who can wonder that there was such an illumination after forty days in such a Presence? On learning the cause of their terror, and to prevent its spreading, he put a veil over his face; and he afterward continued to do so, on coming down from such heavenly communings on the mount.

In the further effort now, under the divine control, to organize the civil and religious polity of the Israelites, that vast encampment was presently roused into activity, and was kept busy with transactions of an extremely interesting kind. It had become more evident, every day, that this people were not fitted for a purely intellectual understanding and worship of Jehovah, but must be operated upon through their outward senses and by the use of symbols and mementoes. Moses may have had hopes at the first to initiate them into a pure, simple religion, in which they would look directly up to God and feel joyfully his presence through the power of a clear, mighty faith. But their minds were too gross for this. Their disposition to seize on emblems for the exercise of a religious sentiment had just been shown. Egypt was full of those emblems, and the hearts of these Israelites had been so accustomed to a cultivation of faith by outward forms that it seemed now to be a vain effort

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[1] For some remarkable recent cases see "Life-Scenes from the Four Gospels," Chap. xxvi., second edition.

entirely to abstract those people from such helps to religious belief. The best that seemingly could now be accomplished, would be to simplify emblems to the utmost, and to bring forms as near as possible to a pure though strong exercise of faith. There must be no image of God, yet God must be felt by visible representations to be in their midst.

Such appears to have been the idea under which, through the divine direction, the *Tabernacle* was to be made.

There would be another benefit in this. The people were now idle and would be so for nearly a year. Here would be something of a public character that would engross all minds, would give all of them employment and would cultivate and refine their taste: moreover, it would give them a present personal interest in the religious acts, such as people always entertain when they have contributed by wealth or labor for the furtherance of such acts.

Moses made the appeal, "This is the thing which the Lord commanded, saying, Take ye from among you an offering unto the Lord: whosoever is of a willing heart, let him bring it, an offering of the Lord;" and he specified gold, silver, brass, fine linen, dyed skins, precious stones, oil, spices, shittim-wood,[1] etc.;" and added, "every wise-hearted man among you shall come, and make all that the Lord hath commanded." Bezaleel and Aholiab, their most expert artificers, whom Moses said, "God had filled with wisdom of heart to work all manner" of such work, were appointed to have a general superintendence; and into their hands the Jewish leader put the offerings as they were poured in. These latter came rapidly in such great abundance that he was presently notified by these men that the people were bringing much more than enough; and he consequently

[1] St. Jerome describes this wood as "hard, tough, smooth, without knots and extremely beautiful: it is supposed to be the black acacia, which is found in the deserts of Arabia, and is so hard and solid as to be almost incorruptible."

had a proclamation made; and "the people were restrained from bringing. For the stuff they had was sufficient for all the work to make it, and too much."

We can well imagine the general excitement, while bringing in these contributions, and while the work was going on; "the women that were wise-hearted did spin with their hands, and brought that which they had spun, both of blue and of purple and of scarlet, and of fine linen:" "the rulers brought onyx stones, and stones to be set for the ephod, and for the breast-plate," and spices, etc., and we are told "the children of Israel brought a willing offering unto the Lord."

So the preparation for the Tabernacle progressed in the camp, while the great lawgiver was busy in his work of preparing the laws. Idleness and its brooding sensations had given way to pleasant employment and activity. People were everywhere watching the progress of the work, were improved by the various criticisms made on the artistic skill of the workmen, and were ready to offer further contributions of precious metals or stones; all were interested, all were alive to the advancing beauty and richness of the work, and all full of pleasant anticipations as to events which were to occur on its completion.

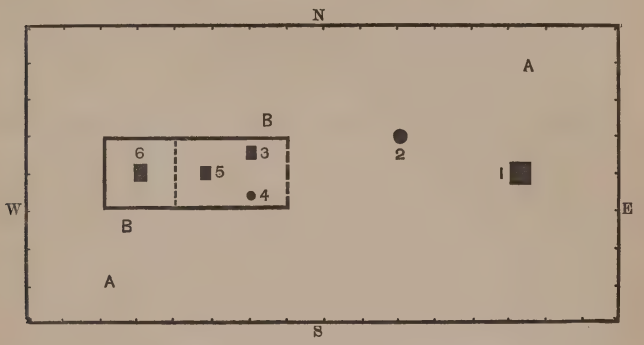
CHAPTER XL.

THE TABERNACLE.

IT was completed in the tenth month after their arrival at Sinai.[1] Much of the carving was exceedingly elaborate, and the whole work formed indeed a great undertaking, if

[1] Compare Ex. xl. 1, with xix. 1.

we consider the place where it was done and the means at their disposal. But on the first day of the new year, the Tabernacle, all complete, was set up, and it was an object which in itself might very well enlist their admiration. It had of course no solidity of architectural forms, for it had all to be of a nature to admit of its being moved; but it had the peculiar gracefulness which drapery always gives, and the materials were also of the richest kinds.



Plan of the Tabernacle and its Court.
A, A, Court. B, B, Tabernacle. 1, Altar of burnt-offerings. 2, Laver. 3, Table of Shew-bread. 4, Golden Candlestick. 5, Altar of Incense. 6, Ark of the Covenant.

There was, first, a rectangular enclosure one hundred and eighty-four feet long by ninety-two in width, and nine feet in height, made by curtains of fine twined linen, hung to pillars of brass filleted with silver, twenty on each side, and nine at each end. The eastern end, where was the entrance, had the curtains of blue, and purple, and scarlet colors, with cords to draw them up or aside.

This outer part enclosed the court; and entering it by the richly-draped eastern end, the spectator would have just before him, an altar for burnt-offerings, nine feet on each side, and five and a half in height. Beyond it was the laver, made of brass, a contribution by the women, who had given their metallic looking-glasses for this purpose. Then,

lastly, beyond the laver was the *Tabernacle*, which was rectangular also, fifty-five feet long, and one third of this in width and height: the two sides and the western end made of shittim-wood, secured by bars of the same wood overlaid with gold. At its eastern end were five pillars of this wood standing in sockets of brass, the capitals and fillets overlaid with gold, and the hooks of gold. This end was covered by a richly-embroidered curtain, supported by the columns, and made to be drawn so as to give admittance. The whole Tabernacle was lined at the sides and ceiling first with a curtain of fine linen, richly embroidered with figures of cherubim. Next over this was a covering of fine goats'-hair; then one of rams'-skins, dyed red; and finally there was an outer covering of a thicker kind of leather.

To one entering the Tabernacle at this eastern end, there would be on his right hand a table three feet eight inches long, by one foot nine inches in width, and two feet eight inches in height, overlaid with gold, with a border of gold, and its dishes and bowls of gold. On this twelve loaves of bread were to be perpetually kept, with perhaps flour also. Opposite this, on the left, was a large golden candlestick with six branches, the branches and shaft, with the appertaining lamps, etc., all of beaten gold. Then, further on and central, was the altar of incense, nearly two feet square, and three feet seven inches high, with a rich border around and horns at the corner, all of which were covered with gold. On this altar incense was to be burned every morning and evening.

This first chamber of the Tabernacle was called the Holy Place, and to it none but priests were admitted: beyond it and separated from it by four pillars set in sockets of silver, and with capitals of gold, and by curtains as at the main entrance, was the Most Holy Place, into which only the High Priest could enter, and for duty but once a year. It was eighteen feet two inches in each of its dimensions, and

had in its centre the "Ark of the Covenant," a chest covered within and without with fine gold. This was four feet six inches long, by two feet eight inches in each of its other dimensions; on it was "The Mercy-seat," of the same dimensions as the top, and made of pure gold. On this mercy-seat he placed "two cherubims of gold, beaten out of one piece made he them, on the two ends of the mercy-seat; one cherub on the end on this side, and another cherub on the other end on that side; out of the mercy-seat made he the cherubims on the two ends thereof. And the cherubims spread out their wings on high, and covered with their wings over the mercy-seat, with their faces one to another; even to the mercy-seat-ward were the faces of the cherubims." Cherubims were allegorical figures among the ancient Hebrews. Their form was sometimes compounded of that of a man, an ox, a lion, and an eagle, the well-known symbols of might and power (see Ezek. i. 10; compare Rev. iv. 6, 7).[1] In the ark or chest were deposited, now, the two tables of stone containing the Ten Commandments, and a pot of manna which was to have the peculiarity of preserving its soundness. Afterward, the rod of Aaron was added, which just before being placed there had budded and brought forth fruit.[2]

All this workmanship had been the engrossing topic of thought, and the subject for pleasing observation in the Israelitish camp for months; and now, when the tabernacle was put up, the multitudes gazed upon it with that deep interest and satisfaction which we have in seeing any successful works of our own hands, especially when the religious sentiment in them is also predominant. They could not hope

[1] See also Gen. iii. 24; Ezek. x. 5, 19; Ps. lxxx. 1; xcix. 1; Ezek. x. 14, etc. Ezekiel's visions have numerous allusions of this kind, and Layard says that sculptured figures of this description are frequent on the palace walls at Nineveh.

[2] Heb. ix. 4.

to vie, in their nomadic life, with the solid grandeur of the Egyptian temples; but here was the utmost that gold and silver and elaborate ornamental carving and fine needle-work could produce, and also what the mind always acknowledges with satisfaction,—the beauty of drapery in rich colors; and most of all, in any comparisons with Egypt, the God for whom this temple was prepared had shown himself the only true God, before whom all Egyptian power, whether in wizard or priest or monarch or armed force, had succumbed.

So the multitude, in dense crowds around, or from good points of observation on the adjoining eminences, watched to see part after part of the Tabernacle and the walls of its court erected, and to see the golden furniture carried in, and the altars and laver put in position; and when this was done, they were contemplating the full effect, when suddenly their attention was drawn to a motion in the pillar of cloud which had so long been their mysterious companion and guide. The cloud floated along over the new erections, and then descended and enveloped them entirely, and "the glory of the Lord" filled the Tabernacle, so that even Moses himself was not able to enter amid the dazzling effulgence, until its first overwhelming brightness had abated. And ever after this, when they were in encampment, directly over the Tabernacle rested the cloud by day and the pillar of fire through the night. When the cloud ascended, they knew that the signal for an onward movement was given: while it continued to rest over this holy place, they were quietly to remain.

On this first occasion of the descent of the cloud, their hearts beat with indescribable emotions; their eyes were filled with tears of a deep joy; a soft murmur of the gratified but awed multitude spread over the plain and hill-sides. God, they felt, was approving their work, and had come to dwell more directly among them than ever before.

Aaron was to be the High Priest. God in consideration of having passed by the houses of the Israelites in their last night in Egypt, claimed all their first-born of man and inferior animals; but in place of the former, he took to himself the tribe of Levi, which was to furnish priests and attendants at his sanctuary. Moses and Aaron were of this tribe. The former at the beginning of this journey exercised the office of chief priest as well as legislator; but these duties were afterward transferred entirely to his brother. To go into a description of the dresses of the priests and their attendants and their various duties would require more space than can be given to it in the present work; but we notice a few items in the dress which should not be omitted. The *ephod* was a square piece of linen cloth, worn before and behind, the two pieces being joined together on the shoulders by buckles, and fastened to the body by a belt. In the case of the high priest it was of blue and purple and scarlet colors, and ornamented with gold, and the buckles were of onyx[1] stones, having on them the names of the twelve tribes. Over the ephod was the "breast-plate of judgment," so called because the High Priest wore it whenever he went into the Tabernacle to consult God about the people. It consisted of twelve precious stones set in gold, in four parallel rows, each having on it the name of one of the tribes. It is added in the Scriptures, "And thou shalt put in the breast-plate of judgment the Urim and the Thummim;[2] and they shall be upon Aaron's heart when he goeth

[1] Supposed to be chalcedony.

[2] Urim is the plural of אור, *light* or *fire:* Thummim the plural of תם, *integrity:* the Septuagint has for them δήλωσις and ἀλήθεια, *revelation* and *truth.* Luther gives to the words the meaning *Light* and *Right.* Josephus and the Rabbins say that the Urim and Thummim consisted of the stones in the breast-plate. Others suppose that we are to understand by them small oracular figures derived from Egyptian usages; it is impossible to determine now what was meant. In the passage above quoted, (Ex. xxviii.

in before the Lord; and Aaron shall bear the judgment of the children of Israel upon his heart before the Lord continually."

Another striking object in the costume of the High Priest was the *mitre*, a high and ornamented turban, having in front of it a gold plate on which was inscribed *Holiness to the Lord.* • Neither he, nor the inferior priests, appear to have used their sacred dresses except when on duty in the Tabernacle.

The erection of the Tabernacle, and with it the institution of various offerings and forms, led to complications in religious duties which put an end to the beautiful simplicity which had distinguished the heart-worship when Moses sang his impromptu hymn and Miriam led in timbrel music on the shores of the Red Sea, or when the congregation bowed awe-struck and in humiliation before the sacred mountain; but such spontaneity in the multitudes could not be always trusted. It was necessary that worship

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30), where the words are used for the first time, they are introduced in the Hebrew with the definite article *the*, as if something previously known was spoken of. Diodorus Siculus, who flourished about 44 years B. C., in his history of the Egyptians, says of the president of the courts of justice, "He bore about his neck a golden chain, at which hung an image set about or composed of precious stones, which was called *Truth*" (Lib. i. CAP. 75), and adds that as soon as the president put this gold chain about his neck, legal proceedings commenced, but not before; and that when the case of the plaintiff had been fully and fairly heard, the president turned the image of truth, which was hung to the golden chain about his neck toward the person whose cause was found to be just, by which he seemed to intimate that truth was on his side.

Ælian (about A. D. 120) gives the same account. He says, "The chief justice or president was always a priest of venerable and acknowledged probity. He had always an image which he called *truth*, cut on a sapphire, and hung about his neck with a gold chain."

The inference which seems to come from all this is, that the Urim and Thummim were something previously known to the Israelites, were probably connected with judicial awards, and were used by Aaron in signifying the Divine decisions which he received in the Tabernacle.

among such ignorant and irregular crowds should be systematized; and he found it necessary also to appeal to their feelings by outward show and to keep their interest awake by constantly recurring forms.

Aaron and his two oldest sons, Nadab and Abihu, were consecrated by Moses, and instituted into their offices of service at the Tabernacle, where the first sacrifices consisted of an atonement made for them. They were afterward to remain at the door of the Tabernacle, day and night, for seven days.

On the eighth day Moses called together the elders of Israel, and with them proceeded into the courts of the Tabernacle, where Aaron and his sons were to receive from the congregation animals to be offered to God, a sin-offering and a burnt-offering, and a meat-offering on the altar, as an atonement for all. The flesh was placed on the altar: "and the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the people, and there came a fire out from before the Lord, and consumed upon the altar the burnt-offering and the fat: which when the people saw they shouted and fell on their faces."

But a terrible calamity broke now suddenly and most fearfully upon the family of Aaron! We know that long afterward the good Eli, judge over Israel, was afflicted with wickedness among his children; and many other good men have been so afflicted: was it that now these two young men were under the influence of wine?—for so an injunction immediately afterward may intimate; or what was the reason for their act? which was an evil one. Here, now, on this most solemn occasion, while the glory of God was specially in the Tabernacle and the people were on their faces before it, Nadab and Abihu took their censers and in them "strange fire"—not from the altar—and also incense; and they had started to offer the latter presumptuously, when "there went out fire from before the Lord, and devoured them, and they died before the Lord."

The spectators might well stand aghast, as they did, at the spectacle. Aaron and his two remaining sons, Eleazar and Ithamar who were to succeed the deceased, were commanded not to make the usual outward demonstrations, probably because it might seem to be an official censure on the Divine act; "for the anointing oil of the Lord," they were told, "is upon you;" but the rest of the congregation were allowed the usual wailing over the dead. To the High Priest the heavenly injunction was given, "Do not drink wine nor strong drink, nor thy sons with thee when ye go into the Tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die; it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations: and that ye may put difference between holy and unholy, and between unclean and clean."

Another instance of severe retribution came not long afterward, adapted to make a strong impression on the minds of the people with respect to the reverence due to God. A man "blasphemed the name of the Lord, and cursed." He was not a full Israelite, being the son of a woman of this people by an Egyptian father, and probably belonged to that "mixed multitude" who had come with them in the Exodus, and were probably always more difficult to control than their own people, and apt to engender mischief. This man had a quarrel with an Israelite, and in the contest with him, broke out in blasphemy of the name of God. He was seized and put in confinement until a decision in the case could be received at the Tabernacle. We might indeed expect some strong example among a people so mixed as these were, so ignorant and ready to turn in rebellion against God. The sentence was that the man should be taken without the camp; those who had heard the blasphemy were there to lay their hands on his head, and then he was to be stoned to death by the congregation. The offence was thenceforward entered on the record, as an act to be considered in the Hebrew law as worthy of death.

During the progress of these events, the great leader, under the influence of the Divine inspiration, was completing that system of laws for the government of the Israelites, which from that time forward made them so unique and remarkable a people, quite distinct from all other nations, and gave them an impress which has come down to our own time.

Their government was to be a *Theocracy*,—God was their king. There were to be subordinate officers, and many subordinate regulations, often very minute; but through all this was the great feature of a theocracy, in which God was the Ruler supreme.

This was indeed a strong demonstration of himself, by the Creator, before all the world. It was the object in all that had gone before; it was to be the object in all yet to come,—*God manifest before the world.* The whole world sunk in idolatry, was a continued proof how much this was needed. Down to our day, indeed, we have proof yet remaining of such need. And the value of such demonstration then made, and of the key which it gives to us for unlocking and reading all history, is widely and clearly manifest to every thinking mind. In this manifestation of himself before the world, God employed the Jewish nation, making use of miracles, and strange, mysterious power, and inspirations of prophets and writers. Then at last came the manifestation of the Deity, not by a cloud as at the Tabernacle, but by Himself in human form, the Perfect One, the Sacrifice for us through the mighty power of Divine love! After that the Jewish nation ceased to be. They are continued as distinct individuals, and are still, everywhere, witnesses for God, but of His *retributive* power; for in crucifying Christ, their rulers had prayed, "His blood be on us and on our children." Therefore, though this people are still a demonstration respecting God, it is one of retribution; and we see them "scattered and peeled and a by-word," as he had

declared they would be if they should forsake him. The strangest of all histories indeed it is! as it might indeed have been expected to be, since God is its author, and his government over all, and his love for all, its subject. Every Jew, scattered as those people are over all the earth, is yet a leaf in that book; and all men may read.

We revert here to a subject already glanced at, but needing further remark, namely, the surprise sometimes expressed by critics at the fact that in this Jewish polity, drawn out by Moses in so much detail, the subject of the soul's immortality, with the vast amount of powerful motives to be drawn from this, is unnoticed. Bishop Warburton has even deduced from this silence a singular argument for establishing the divine legation of this great leader.[1] A very probable reason, however, for such neglect,

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[1] Bishop Warburton's "Divine Legation of Moses Demonstrated." We give a summary of his argument, using his own words:

"We erect our demonstration on these three very clear and simple propositions:

"I. That to inculcate the doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishments, is necessary to the well-being of civil society.

"II. That all mankind, especially the most wise and learned nations of antiquity, have concurred in believing and teaching that this doctrine was of such use to civil society.

"III. That the doctrine of a future state of rewards and punishments is not to be found in, nor did make part of, the Mosaic dispensation.

"IV. That therefore the Law of Moses is of Divine original, which one or both of the following syllogisms will evince:

"1. Whatsoever religion and society have no future state for their support, must be supported by an extraordinary Providence. The Jewish religion and society had no future state for their support. Therefore the Jewish religion and society were supported by an extraordinary Providence.

"Again, 2. The ancient lawgivers universally believed that such religion could be supported only by an extraordinary Providence. Moses, an ancient lawgiver, versed in all the wisdom of Egypt, purposely instituted such a religion:

"Therefore Moses believed his religion was supported by an extraordinary Providence."

seems clearly to lie in the necessity of avoiding everything that would sweep the multitudes back into the Egyptian superstitions. Among these, the observances for the dead, joined in close connection with Osiris the judge of the dead, formed, as has been already noticed, a large part of the religious and domestic life of the Egyptians. The mind of any individual whatever must have been confounded immediately, in trying to penetrate into that subject. To their priests it was one full of mysticisms; to their people it was knit inextricably with Osiris, whom it made in their minds, as he was in their sculptured temples, the great god to be honored, and whose favor was to be sought. To these Israelites, to whom all this had been familiar from childhood, and who were now ready to rush back into such superstitions with that momentum which love and reverence for their own dead must have produced, it would now have been dangerous to give any such impulse or encouragement; and it was safer altogether to avoid the topic, leaving the immense amount of motives for right action that can be drawn from the soul's immortality, to the operation of their already formed belief that the soul does not perish at death. This belief they doubtless all entertained. Moses was content to let the matter so rest, rather than to stir up thoughts that might carry them rapidly back into idolatry. His own purpose was now a single and simple one, namely, to lift them up to a faith in the true God and obedience to Him. How fully they were imbued with the Egyptian superstitions and idolatries, we see from Joshua xxiv. 14, and God's word in Ezekiel xx. 7, 8, and from their quick action in the case of the golden calf here at Sinai.

Indeed, the difficulties in legislating for this people, so crude in intellect, so debased in habits by their long slavery, so ready to become insolent in self-sufficiency, even by reason of God's constant favor to them, and at the same time so ready to desert him for any false gods, must have been

felt to be almost insurmountable—especially as Moses had no physical force to sustain his authority among them, and could only appeal to their convictions, which seem often to have had very little influence over their conduct. Only one power he had in addition to their convictions, and this arose from these outward manifestations of Jehovah, such as at Sinai—the thunder and lightning on the mountain top, the cloud and glory at the Tabernacle, and the retributions following on their misdeeds. Yet, just after the manifestations on Sinai, they had hastened to make an imitation of the Egyptian Mnevis, and in nakedness had danced before the golden calf!

He had indeed a difficult task.

His great system of laws cannot, of course, be drawn out in this book, and the reader is referred for them to the Bible itself: we only glance, in conclusion, at an order for three special observances in each year; the Passover festival, commemorative of the night scene at the time of their deliverance from slavery; the Feast of Tabernacles, to be a reminder of their present journeying and its events; and the Feast of Pentecost, or a general thanksgiving to God for the blessings of the year.

CHAPTER XLI.

THE MOVEMENT FROM SINAI.

THE cloud rose from the Tabernacle. It was the signal for a movement! The signal was a welcome one; for inactivity had become wearisome to those great multitudes, among whom, since the Tabernacle had been finished and

the novelty of the sacrifices and of the new forms had passed away, there had been little to occupy the mind.

The manner of movement in their future journeyings and the plan of their encampment when the ground would admit of it, were now all well systematized and written out. In encamping, the Tabernacle was to have the central place. In front of it, that is, on the east, were to be, after a sufficient vacant interval, the tents of Moses and Aaron. On its right were to be the Kohathites, numbering eight thousand six hundred males from one year old and upward: and it was the duty of these to transport and take care of the ark, the table, candlesticks, altars, and other appurtenances of the Tabernacle and court: on the left, the Merarites (six thousand two hundred males), who had charge of the pillars, bars, sockets, boards, etc.; in the rear, the Gershonites (seven thousand five hundred males), who were to transport the coverings and hangings and similar things belonging to the Tabernacle and its court. These were all families of the tribe of Levi, and therefore particularly devoted to the religious services. Outside of all these was the general encampment of tribes; and beginning at the north-east and going westward, were Asher, Daniel and Naphtali; then south, Manasseh, Ephraim and Benjamin; then east, Simeon, Reuben and Gad; and then north, Issachar, Judah and Zebulun. A numbering of the tribes had just been made, which showed that those from twenty years and upward, who were able to go forth to war, amounted to 603,550: this was independently of the Levites, whose males, twenty years and upward, were twenty-two thousand in number. The whole encampment, if made according to the plan thus drawn out, it is computed, would require about twelve miles on each side; consequently it was only on wide open ground that such an arrangement could be carried into effect. The surplus of contributions which had been offered and declined at the construction of the Taber-

nacle, had been afterward called for, when the altar for sacrifices was ready for use. Among the offerings of gold and silver, and cattle, now freely made, were also draught-oxen, which, with wagons for carrying the coarser portions of the Tabernacle and court, assisted materially in the labor of transportation.

A religious ceremony was used when the ark was moved, and again when it came to a halting-place; in the former case Moses said, "Rise up, Lord, and let thine enemies be scattered; and let them that hate thee flee before thee:" and in the latter, "Return, O Lord, unto the many thousands of Israel."

The vast company was again in motion. The neighborhood of Sinai had become like a home to them; so familiar was now every spot there, and so filled with various associations of friendly intercourse among themselves and of mutual labors. Every crag of the awful mountain and of the surrounding peaks had been gazed upon, till it had become like an old acquaintance. The more restless among them had penetrated the defiles leading in all directions among the frowning precipices, and had climbed the heights of the mountain now called Jebel Catharin, immediately on the south-west from Sinai, and from its peak, eight thousand two hundred and seventy-two feet above the sea, or two thousand seven hundred and seventy above the encampment, had gazed on the wide prospect which it commanded. This embraces the immense billowy masses of mountains spread far around; and beyond these, on the west, the Gulf of Suez and its African shore; on the east, portions of the Gulf of Akabah, and on the north, the range of Et Tih beyond which is seen to stretch, far onward, the level, sandy desert. The whole scene exhibited so widely before the spectator is very grand, but also very gloomy and desolate. If in all directions, the prospect to those spectators was repulsive, it was particularly so toward the

east, where the mountain masses while lacking the lofty, stern grandeur of those in the rest of the peninsula, are even more crowded, and are, says Robinson, "a mass of black, abrupt, naked, weather-worn peaks,—a fitting spot where the very genius of desolation might erect his horrid throne."

Yet now, when the encampment did move at last, it went directly into this forbidding region. So at least, we may infer from incidents on the journey which will be noticed as they occur. We have only the information in the Record, that they "departed from the mount of the Lord three days' journey;" but it seems probable that they passed along Wady Sheikh eastwardly for a little way, and then, when this turns northwardly, left it and entered among the wadys by which this "sea of mountains," as Robinson calls it, is penetrated toward the east.

There were immediate complainings among the people (Num. xi. 1). These complaints seem to have been in the outskirts of the company, among the hangers-on of camps, such as always belong to large moving bodies, and form the restless, troublesome spirits of a community. Just such would have climbed the heights of Jebel Catharin, and would have taken cognizance of this maze of frightful cliffs lying eastwardly, with an expressed hope that their way would not lie thitherward; and now that it did plunge into these ravines, although led by the pillar of cloud, these stragglers in spite of its guidance were beginning to make mischief by their forebodings and complaints. Very soon, amid the toils and discomforts of the new movement, such murmurings would become contagious, and they were already beginning to spread, when suddenly the complainers were swept off by a divine visitation. We know not how, in what form, this came, more than that "the fire of the Lord burnt among them, and consumed them that were in the uttermost parts of the camp." A cry of distress and

alarm was raised by the survivors; and then, on their application, Moses prayed for them, and "the fire was quenched." He called the place *Taberah*, "A Burning," in commemoration of the event.

But not long afterward a general mutinous commotion spread through the camp; and the spirit of the great leader, though he knew God was on his side, was temporarily beat down in utter discouragement. The cry now was for animal food. The commotion began among "the mixed multitude" that came out with the true Israelites from Egypt; a set of men from whom troubles might be naturally expected, for they felt themselves less amenable to the laws of God then did the others. But the complaint now found strong answering sympathies among the whole community. During all the time at Sinai the manna had continued to descend at night, and a wholesome bread had been made from it, and the people had the greatest abundance of this food, but the sameness of it for nearly a year, with little else, had become tiresome, and the gathering of the manna began to be mingled with a longing for animal food, which soon took an aggravated form. This longing was now mingled with unusual fatigue. The protracted time of their encampment had enervated their strength, and they were less able to endure the trials of journeying than at the first. Discomforts, if not real, still imaginary, multiplied upon them by the way. The old and the feeble, and the children, soon began to raise cries of distress from fatigue, and the mixed multitude, ready to produce sedition, insinuated the grievance of having to bear it without strengthening food. It was insinuated that this was only the beginning. "Look," might be said by the complainers, "look at the mountains before you, and the frightful ravines: you are already fainting: here will surely be your graves: better far to have died amid the variety of good things in Egypt: *our soul is dried away: there is nothing at all besides this manna*

before our eyes." People under the present trials, and the prospects for the future, broke down and wept, and even strong men felt the contagion. An animal desire, when the thoughts are allowed to run on it, grows at once in intensity: "Moses heard the people weep throughout their families, every man in the door of his tent."

He himself raised a bitter cry,—not like theirs for such indulgence, but in despair. What should he do with such a people as this? He was ready to abandon hope. He murmured even against God. Indeed the burden that he had been bearing alone was very heavy for any one man, and even his large intellect and strong moral nature were staggering under it. It was such a bitter thing to have the whole of these complaints directed against him, as if he were the cause of all this suffering, and as if the congregation were not led on by this pillar of cloud and of fire. And these were a people for whom he himself had perilled so much and done so much! His heart sunk within him utterly, but he had still strength left to cry to God. It was, however, almost a cry of reproach:

"Wherefore hast thou afflicted thy servant? and wherefore have I not found favor in thy sight, that thou layest the burden of all this upon me? Have I conceived all this people? Have I begotten them, that thou shouldest say unto me, Carry them in thy bosom, as a nursing-father beareth the sucking child, unto the land which thou swearest unto their fathers? Whence should I have flesh to give unto all this people? for they weep unto me, saying, Give us flesh, that we may eat. I am not able to bear all this people alone, because it is too heavy for me. And if thou deal thus with me, kill me, I pray thee, out of hand, if I have found favor in thy sight; and let me not see my wretchedness."

It was a plaintive cry unworthy of Moses, who had seen so many manifestations of God and of the power and care

exercised by him; and it shows that his mind, great as it was, had become overstrained by the burdens it had been compelled to bear. The answer was one of strong decision, reaching decidedly to all the case. He was to collect the seventy elders into the Tabernacle, and God would manifest himself there before them, and "I will take of the spirit which is upon thee, and I will put it upon them: and they shall bear the burden of the people with thee, that thou bear it not thyself alone." There was a promise also that on the morrow flesh would be sent, sufficient in quantity for a whole month: finally people should loathe it; for it was the divine purpose to send with it a plague as a punishment for their perverseness.

The seventy were assembled, and God in manifest presence put a spirit of wisdom and prophecy into them; and in their exhibitions of the latter, it was felt by the people that the responsibility in the future was divided between Moses and these men. During the day, also a strong wind brought immense flocks of quails from the direction of the eastern sea. They flew so low—only a few feet above the earth—as to be easily taken; and through the day and night they were captured throughout the camp and in its neighborhood. A writer, Maillet, speaking of Egypt, says that in certain seasons, when birds come there in great quantities, "the people catch and pluck them and bury them in the burning sand for a few minutes, and thus prepare them for use." But while the Israelites were yet in the first excesses of their eating, disease broke out among them, perhaps from their excess; and "the Lord smote the people with a very great plague. The place received from their leader the name of *Kibroth-hattaavah*, "Graves of Lusting," to be a reminder of the people thus buried there.

Their next camping-place was Hazeroth: and as there is now eastward from Sinai, at the distance of four or five days' journey from that mountain, a fountain called by the

Arabs *el-Hŭdhera*, the similarity of names seems to point out this spot as that alluded to in the Sacred Record.[1] It is one of the reasons above hinted at for believing that the Israelites took this easterly course; and with it may be connected the question put by Moses in the recent transactions, (Num. xi. 22), "Shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them?" by which, and the subsequent events, we may infer that they were near the eastern gulf of the Red Sea. This spot at the fountain of el-Hŭdhera is still a favorite stopping-place for the Arabs for water and for feeding their camels on the verdure around.

A strange and most unexpected event comes now before us at this place;—a rising up against Moses by Aaron and Miriam. Jealousy was the cause of it. He had married, as we know, a Midianite woman, Zipporah, the daughter of an Arabian Sheikh, and she was ostensibly the cause[2] of the present trouble in the family. Aaron may have felt himself slighted in not being numbered among the seventy; and Miriam, who seems to have been the chief mover in this trouble, may have been offended by having her own consequence as the sister of the leader not sufficiently recognized, perhaps overshadowed by that of the wife. "Hath the Lord, indeed, spoken only by Moses," they said; "hath he not spoken also by us?" Their brother on this occasion made no complaint to God; but bore it in the quiet of a great and patient man.[3] But God called him and the sister and brother, directing them to come to the Tabernacle, where the cloud now manifested his especial presence. The two offenders were audibly reproved by the heavenly voice;

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[1] The reader is referred to the general map on page 316, No. 8.

[2] She is called Ethiopian in our version: in the original it is *Cushite*, and *Cush* appears sometimes to designate parts of Arabia: see Hab. iii. 7; 2 Chron. xxi. 16; Gen. x. 8.

[3] Our version makes him call himself "very meek above all men," but the original will signify, just as well, *afflicted*, humble, &c. See Ps. x. 12, 17.

and then the cloud lifted again, no longer filling the sacred chamber. But when they came to look on Miriam, to their horror they saw that she was "leprous, white as snow." Aaron now interceded with Moses, and then Moses with God. She was promised restoration from heaven, but it was directed that she should be shut out from communion with the camp for seven days. The camp remained at Hazeroth till her exile from it and her mourning were completed.

CHAPTER XLII.

AT KADESH-BARNEA—SPIES SENT OUT.

WE are now about to follow these multitudes into a new region, and as their present advent to it resulted in making it their home for thirty-eight years, and it was to be the burial-place by doom of a large part of the host, we will endeavor to get a clear idea of the country.[1]

From the north-eastern gulf of the Red Sea,—the gulf of Akabah—there extends up quite to the Dead Sea a broad valley called Wady Arabah, from seven to ten miles wide and one hundred and twenty miles in length. It is generally pretty smooth, but ascends gradually as it proceeds northwardly from Akabah,—the present town at the head of the gulf,—till within fifteen miles of the Dead Sea, when there is a sudden descent of one hundred and fifty feet at a spot where a range of cliffs passes quite across the valley. Formerly the opinion was common that the waters of the Jordan, after flowing over the basin at the Dead Sea, had discharged themselves originally by this valley into the gulf

[1] The reader will do well to refer again to the general map, p. 316.

of Akabah, but geological facts are now supposed to be decisive against such belief. Dr. Olin speaks of Wady Arabah as "a broad and fertile plain;" but the appearance of fertility we may believe to arise chiefly from its contrast with the utterly bare mountains and the desert bordering it on the west. At the eastern side of this valley rise the very picturesque and sometimes beautiful mountains of Edom. On its west is a region which we must notice more in detail, for it has an important place in the history of the Israelites. In that direction is what is now called the Desert et-Tih, formerly doubtless "The Wilderness of Paran."

The whole desert region extending from Wady Arabah to the Mediterranean, although irregular in its outline, may be said to be one hundred and fifty statute miles from north to south, and the same from east to west. The rock is, universally, limestone, but the surface of the ground, except in the few places where mountains or precipices break in on its uniformity, is a coarse, hard gravel, covered with black flints and drift. The whole of this large region, of twenty-two thousand five hundred square miles, is with slight exceptions a nearly even and barren waste. It is drained by two wadys and their confluents, one (the larger) being the Wady el-Arish, anciently "The river of Egypt," opening into the Mediterranean in lat. 31° 5′ north: the other, the Wady el-Jerâfeh opening into the valley of el-Arabah. These wadys, however, it must be remembered are only very shallow and broad depressions in the ground, just sufficient to collect and carry off the waters in rainy seasons, and at all other times entirely dry.

If the reader will suppose himself to start at Beersheba, and go south, he will pass over a country in general declining very gently, covered at first with grass and shrubs, which soon, however, cease, leaving only the bare, hard earth sprinkled over thickly with black pebbles, the whole surface scorched by the fiery sun. Thus onward for about fifty

miles, the ground still all the while slightly declining; and then he will come to Wady el-Arish, beyond which there is an easy upward slope with a surface similar to the other, and extending on for about one hundred miles. In this long distance the ascent has become considerable, and finally it reaches an elevation of four thousand three hundred and twenty-two feet above the sea. Then, there is a sudden, wall-like descent, forming the apparent ridge or hill showing itself eastwardly from Suez, and from the line of travel taken by the Israelites, from the crossing of the Red Sea to Sinai. Below this wall of descent is a belt of sandstone, and then succeeds the mountainous granite region of the peninsula.

Such are the general features of this great desert between Wady Arabah and the Mediterranean; but they are varied occasionally by bare hills, where the limestone crops out, and with its garish whiteness blinds still more the pained and wearied eyes. Another exception exists in successions of cliffs or rapid descents at the eastern edge of the desert, where it sinks down to the level of Wady Arabah. One of these cliffs was soon to have a terrible distinction in the history of the Israelites. We will only add now that the sudden wall-like descent from the desert, looking like a ridge as seen from below, is, while continuing parallel to the Gulf of Suez, called Jebel Rahah; then it curves round more to the eastward under the name of Jebel et-Tih; then it divides, and a part, branching off, goes under the name of Jebel Ojmeh more to the north.

We now try to follow the great hosts led on by their pillar of cloud, but we do it amid many perplexities; for the region in which they travelled for some time has few distinctive marks by which we may have a clue to their course. The scenes at the close of the last chapter were at Hazeroth, and the present name of the fountain el-Hŭdhera, with its position, seems to be a guide to us from Sinai

eastwardly as far as that place. "Then," we are told, "the people removed from Hazeroth, and pitched in the wilderness of Paran." Sixteen miles northward from el-Hŭdhera is now a remarkable fountain called simply *el-Ain* (*the fountain*), the water of which is abundant and pure, and its neighborhood is so green and beautiful as to be likened, though in an inferior degree, to the "gem of the desert" in Feiran. In the map published by Lepsius a deep valley leads from el-Hŭdhera to this fountain, and the distance to it, sixteen miles or a day's journey, seems to point it out as their next camping-spot. Eastward from this and also from el-Hŭdhera, and quite along the border of the Gulf of Akabah, the whole region is a succession of irregular granite mountains full of difficult passes: but northward of el-Ain and twenty miles distant is the ascent of Et-Tih, having climbed which, the Israelites would find themselves in the more open country at the commencement of the desert which we have just described. There they would very soon strike the Wady Jerâfeh; and as this journey was in May, we may suppose that by following this valley they would have grass, and by slight digging might also procure water. Robinson crossed Wady Jerâfeh, in his journey from Akabah to Beersheba, and says "it exhibits traces of a large volume of water in the rainy season; and is full of herbs and shrubs, with many Seyal and Turfe trees."

We may believe therefore, that the region drained by the Jerâfeh is the "wilderness of Paran" to which the Israelites resorted after leaving Hazeroth, and that we have thus traced them well on toward their clearly-designated stopping-place, *Kadesh-barnea*, in a region which soon became to them so eventful. Wady Jerâfeh conducts by long and easy descents to the Wady Arabah; and soon after reaching the latter brings us to the most celebrated fountain in all the Arabah, the *Ain el-Weibeh*, still eagerly resorted to by the Arabs in all their journeyings in this region. This

spot is universally conceded to be the Kadesh-barnea of the Scriptures.

Here the Israelites rested. It was, indeed, highly necessary that they should rest and enter into mature deliberations about the immediate future: for they were now but a few miles from the borders of Canaan. Beersheba was only fifty-two miles distant from them toward the northwest, and Hebron sixty miles to the north. Of the people in Canaan, and of the country, little could be known to these numerous invading hosts. Abraham had lived there four hundred and thirty years previously, and God had then promised the country to his descendants. The same promises, they knew, had been repeated to Isaac and Jacob: but any traditions that had come down from Jacob's emigration, two hundred and fifteen years in the past, had grown faint, and these, his descendants, were now full of earnest curiosity respecting this their destined home. Coming as they did in such large numbers, they could not be considered as any other than a race of invaders before whom the inhabitants of the country would have either to retire in a body, or set themselves up in determined resistance: for the land would not be able to contain both. Which would it be? What was the nature of those people,—fierce or gentle? Had they cities and were those cities fortified? What was the country itself, destined, they were told, to be their future habitation? These were questions which were pressing hard upon the vast multitudes now encamped about Kadesh, and were filling them with very deep solicitude. True it was that God had promised the land to their forefathers, and also that the mysterious power which had delivered themselves from Egypt and had given them bread from heaven, and had led them on by the cloud and fiery pillar, could now afford them any needed help; but this power had also shown itself to them in retributive forms, and they knew how greatly, from their rebellions against God, they were

deserving of retribution. Indeed one of the most terrible things in their present condition, with possible trials before them, was the dimming of their faith in the certainty of God's favor to them individually, since they knew that they had forfeited his favor, and that he was a God to punish as well as to bless. Several times he had already threatened to sweep their whole nation from the earth, and Moses had saved them only by humble and earnest entreaty, and by representations that, in such a case, the Egyptians would triumph and heathenism be glorified. What was coming now? Here they were on the edge of Canaan. What would be the results of such an approach to it evidently for invasion? A great trial was before the Israelites. It became them to be cautious. They were indeed full of anxiety.

So they gathered around Moses here at Kadesh, and asked him to send some of their number up into the country, to examine it, and to make report.[1] Divine directions were given to the same effect, and twelve of the head men were now selected, one from each tribe, to go forward and "to spy out the land." Among these were Caleb of the tribe of Judah; and from that of Ephraim, Oshea, whose name Moses changed to Jehoshua. The directions given were, "Get you up this way, southward, and go up into the mountain: and see the land, what it is; and the people that dwelleth therein, whether they be strong or weak, few or many; and what the land is that they dwell in, whether it be good or bad; and what cities they be that they dwell in, whether in tents or in strongholds; and what the land is, whether it be fat or lean, whether there be wood therein, or not. And be ye of good courage, and bring of the fruit of the land."

The multitudes saw them start off on their dangerous

[1] See Deut. i. 22.

mission; watched them as their forms disappeared among the hills adjoining the camp, and then turned to speculate further in their minds as respected events soon to be divulged, and also to look more widely at the region in which they were situated. The Wady Arabah is at that spot about ten miles wide; it has for its eastern boundary the mountains of Edom, rising in successive increasing elevations, till they attain an altitude of about three thousand feet. They are diversified, and frequently rich in verdure. Nearly opposite the encampment of the Israelites they are pierced by the large Wady Ghuweir, fed by streams, and to this day one of the most productive spots in all that region. To this richness and beauty of Edom the western side of the Arabah forms an entire and gloomy contrast; for here the mountains are bare and utterly barren, apparently repelling every attempt to gain any cheerfulness of hope in that direction. Yet over them was now to be the road to Canaan, the promised land. The Israelites gazed upon them with forebodings. Beyond them were probably enemies to be encountered; nature itself seemed also to be there, rising up in forbidding aspects.

The fountain el-Weibeh, whence they were now drawing their supplies of water, is on the west side of Wady Arabah, just where the ascent of these barren mountains commences. Its name, Kadesh (holy), is proof that it was an important place in those ancient times, as it is also now, for it is the only good watering-place in the whole extent of the Arabah, one hundred and twenty miles long. But it owes its celebrity rather to the scarcity of water in that region than to any beauty in itself. There are three fountains issuing from the chalky rock of which the slope is composed. "They are," says Robinson, "some rods apart, running out in small streams from the foot of a low rise of the ground at the edge of the hills. The water is not abundant; and in the two northernmost sources has a sickly

hue, like most of the desert fountains, with a taste of sulphuretted hydrogen. But the southernmost consists of three small rills of limpid, good water, flowing out of a small excavation in the rock. The soft, chalky stone has crumbled away, forming a semi-circular ledge about six feet high around the spring, and now a few feet distant from it. The intermediate space is at present occupied by earth, but the rock apparently once extended out, so that the water actually issued from its base." The Arabah opposite is "everywhere sprinkled with herbs and shrubs," and just below the fountains "is a jungle of coarse grass and canes, and a few palm trees, presenting at a distance the appearance of full verdure, but proving near at hand to be marshy, and full of bogs."

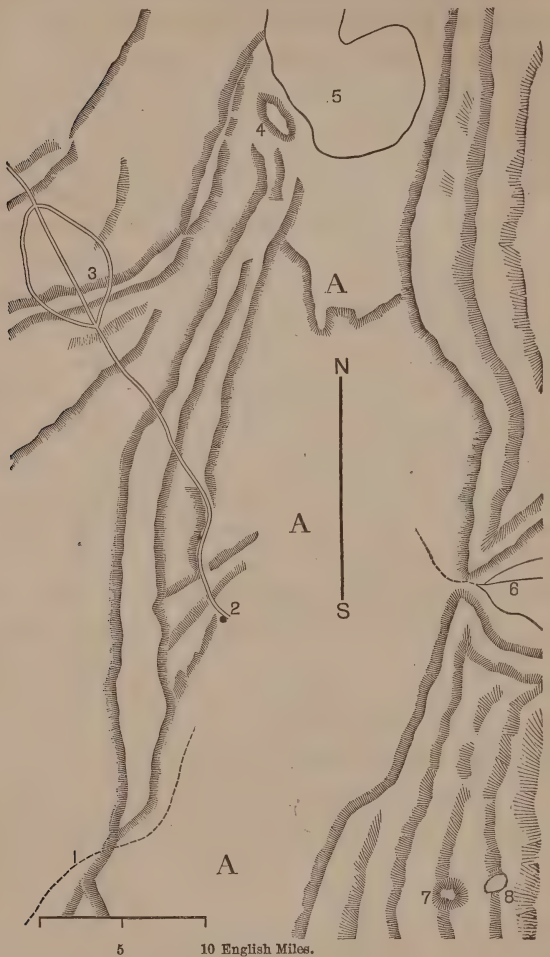
It is probable that the tents of the Israelites occupied the region not only about the fountain, but the heights back of it on the west, where the occupants would have a better temperature than in the bottom of Wady Arabah, shut in and with reverberations of heat from both sides. Two or three millions of people would require much room, and we may suppose their encampment to have stretched for some miles up the hill-sides, and on the level spots, to the west of the fountain. This will help to elucidate events which were now about to transpire.

CHAPTER XLIII.

A MUTINY AND CARNAGE.

FORTY days the spies were absent; and through all that time there was deep anxiety, with many surmisings, many hopes and anxieties, and resolves also made for the

Map showing the region of the Mutiny and Slaughter.



1. Wady Jerâfeh.
2. El-Weibeh, believed to be Kadesh-barnea.
3. Hill *es-Sufah*—place of the Carnage.
4. Hill of Salt.
5. Southern end of Dead Sea.
6. Wady Ghuweir, probably the "king's highway" into Edom.
7. Mount Hor.
8. Present ruins of Petra.

A, A, A. Wady Arabah.

emergencies that might arise. It was a time of idleness in the camp, and idleness always, especially in so large and mixed a multitude, is productive of mischief. Now that danger might also be near them, they thought and talked much about their safety, and the comparative abundance on the green plains of Egypt. Green plains had become only a seemingly remote remembrance to them; and their eyes longed, if only for the sight of green turf to give its refreshment to their senses once more: but instead of greenness, the mountains back of them and toward Canaan, showed only crag after crag in utter bareness, bleached white by centuries of burning sun. "Was this the land," some of them asked scoffingly, "for which their leader had decoyed them away from their safe homes and green pastures on the banks of the Nile?" Their encampment now was only thirty miles from the southern end of the Dead Sea; and if any of them, as is probable, wandered to it, during these forty days, and tasted its waters, they found that in taste the Nile had here its very extremity of contrast; this water was far less drinkable than even that of the Red Sea; was perfectly nauseous! And onward to the northward, beyond where their eyes could distinguish any boundaries, continued to stretch that same dull, leaden sea.

Thus, we may easily conceive, how ready for violent eruption was the feeling among the people, idle, agitated, brooding over past enjoyments, and vexed with present discomforts; and how sensitive were the nerves of the vast multitudes, when, at the expiration of forty days, they saw the spies return. These men had done their assigned work thoroughly; for they had been as far as the extreme northern boundaries of Canaan, lying along the flanks of Lebanon; and after making themselves acquainted with the agricultural wealth and military strength of the whole country, had brought back specimens of its fruits. Among these were grapes, a single cluster of which was long enough to

require that it should be carried on a staff between two men, to keep it from trailing on the ground.[1] The account which they gave of the productiveness of the country was most satisfactory; but what they said of its military capabilities was entirely the reverse. Of the land, they said "it surely floweth with milk and honey; and this is the fruit of it. Nevertheless, the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled, and very great; and moreover, we saw the children of Anak there. The Amalekites dwell in the land of the south: and the Hittites, and the Jebusites, and the Amorites, dwell in the mountains; and the Canaanites dwell by the sea, and by the coast of Jordan."

There was a great commotion throughout all this great host. Among such multitudes the timid are always more numerous than the brave; and fear is always more contagious than courage. The report about the giants, children of Anak,—such men as the company had never yet seen—and about the walled cities, appalled the people. The brave Caleb, and doubtless also Joshua, stood up before them with a different aspect, and a courageous cry; "Let us go up at once and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it." He was overborne by the testimony of the other ten. Terror had taken possession of these, and was now heightened by the general spread of fear. "There we saw the giants, the sons of Anak, which come of the giants: and we were in our own sight as grasshoppers, and so we were in their sight," was repeated by the ten dismayed spies.

Through all the night there was weeping everywhere in

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[1] The author of this work has himself purchased at Jaffa a cluster two feet long: on mentioning this to other officers of the same ship (the U. S. ship Delaware), they said that they had seen clusters still longer. The grapes on it were not large or thickly clustered, but this cluster would require to be carried in the manner here specified, in order to keep it from being injured in transportation, or greatly wearying the person carrying it.

the camp. Those Eastern nations are always a demonstrative people; and the Israelites on this occasion felt that there was no reason for restraint, but the contrary. Darkness, too, is always suggestive of increased causes of alarm; and terrors which in daylight men can brace themselves up to meet, at night take proportions before which the bravest sometimes shrink. By morning, the terror heightened by this general weeping had the complete mastery over the multitudes. When Moses and Aaron attempted to withstand it, they were met by a universal cry, "Would God that we had died in the land of Egypt!" "Would God that we had died in this wilderness!"—for a quiet death in the wilderness seemed to them less terrific than by violence from these giants.

The feeling in the camp was beginning to be dangerous to the two leaders themselves. As they stood there, firmly opposing the general alarm, they saw people's eyes either turned from them as unwilling to meet theirs, or flashing back an angry or a defiant expression. Looks were scowling, and soon became fierce, and then were knit into expressions of set purposes of resistance.

There was clearly a mutiny! and finally it spoke out, boldly in determined words. There had always been bad men in the camp, jealous of Moses, envious, plotting, and mischievous, whenever there was opportunity for mischief. There always will be such in society, and they are as cunning as mischievous. Among the Israelites, such men had been ever busy with insinuations and evil designs; but they had been kept down hitherto by the general sentiment in favor of the leaders. The poison from their words had, however, worked in men's hearts; and now, aided by new efforts from the malcontents, it showed its effects openly. The whole camp broke out in one mutinous cry, "Wherefore hath the Lord brought us unto this land, to fall by the sword, that our wives and our children should be a prey?

Were it not better for us to return into Egypt? And they said one to another, Let us make a captain, and let us return into Egypt."

Moses and Aaron felt that there was, indeed, no help now, but from on high. They fell on their faces before God, in the sight of the people; a mute appeal to heaven and a sign of shame that those men could utter such words.

Joshua and Caleb rent their clothes in grief and anger. They tried a remonstrance: "The land which we passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the Lord is with us: fear them not."

Alas! the faith of the Israelites that God was with them had been dimmed! They had so often shown themselves perverse and distrustful, that perversity and distrust had grown almost into an irksomeness of God's presence. They were in a turmoil of passions now,—of fear, of regrets, of longing for Egypt, of resentment against Moses and Aaron, of doubts about God himself. Any appeal to their faith was only adding fresh irritations: even reason employed in argument stung them only into more furious rage. In the same degree with which they had previously respected Joshua and Caleb as brave men, they hated them now as the abettors of Moses and Aaron: passion and fury ruled in the demonstrative multitude: a universal shout arose *to stone Joshua and Caleb!*

But suddenly a deep silence fell upon all the multitudes. They were arrested midway in their murderous attempt: faces changed in an instant from the fierceness of anger into an expression of awe; hands raised, or clenching deadly missiles, fell as if palsied and incapable; cold fear and a horror took the place of the burning rage just now firing

the hosts. All eyes had been drawn suddenly to manifestations of the peculiar presence of God in the Tabernacle, which his glory was now filling, and from which it was beaming forth. God was there strikingly and emphatically manifesting himself. The people were caught in the very act of mutinous and insane deeds of deadly intent, and they felt like detected culprits, which they knew themselves actually to be.

Moses hastened to the Tabernacle; and he there had a revelation that filled his great heart with dismay. God said, "How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they believe me, for all the signs which I have showed them? I will smite them with the pestilence and disinherit them, and will make of thee a greater nation and mightier than they." Moses answered, "Then the Egyptians shall hear it;" and he added that all adjoining nations would rejoice at the destruction of God's favored people, and at the apparent inability of God to protect and help them. He ended with the prayer, "Pardon, I beseech thee, the iniquity of this people according to the greatness of thy mercy, and as thou hast forgiven this people from Egypt even until now."

The prayer was granted to a certain extent. It was, indeed, made too clearly evident, even to human perception, that these people were not of such character and disposition as to do credit to any divine cause with which they might be connected. So abject had they become in that slavery for which they were even now longing again on account of its few meagre sensual comforts, so dulled in intellect and so brutalized, that nothing short of a miracle upon the mind seemed capable of elevating them to the sphere which it was intended that they should occupy. They were turbulent, ill-tempered, seditious; easily acted upon by trifling circumstances or by mischievous people; and altogether wanting in steadiness of purpose or in firm principle of

action or in steady faith. God had tried to elevate them, but his strong efforts and the great providences necessary to this had only produced in them presumption, and sometimes insolence; and now they had broken into open mutiny. They were clearly not the people fit to go in and possess the Promised Land, even though the way to such possession should be made clear by divine interposition: nor would they honor God's cause after such possession.

The divine declaration was now made to Moses in the Tabernacle, that a part of the burden of their prayer, namely, "*would God that we had died in this wilderness,*" should, with the exception of Caleb and Joshua and all under twenty years of age, *be granted;* and for the rest, it was emphatically declared, "As ye have spoken in mine ears, so will I do to you: your carcases shall fall in this wilderness; and all that were numbered of you, according to your whole number, from twenty years old and upward, which have murmured against me. . . . . But your little ones, which ye said should be a prey, them will I bring in, and they shall know the land which ye have despised."

The multitudes were standing without the Tabernacle in trepidation. They knew that they were guilty, and that they had been caught in the very act of rebellion against God. The glory in the Tabernacle was filling them with awe. They knew the power of Jehovah, for they had seen it against their enemies at the Red Sea:—was it now about to overwhelm themselves? They knew there could be no escape from it: they stood silently in fear or they slunk away to their tents, everywhere meeting, however, only looks of alarm and of self-condemnation.

Moses came out, and the divine decision was promulgated. Part of it met with a speedy fulfilment; for the recreant ten out of the twelve sent to examine the land were seized immediately by disease in the form of plague, and perished, —the first of the immense multitude that were to die off

and find their graves in that wilderness. Mourning succeeded now to rage. Throughout the camp there were outcries of bitter lamentation, the greater because they knew that the general doom had been merited. There was in the mourning no comfort, no self-sustaining feeling, but only an utter despondency in that consciousness that they were in the hands of a Power which they knew there was no resisting, and which had already made the demonstration before their eyes of a doom which was to be so general, and which, now that it seemed to be inevitable, took new and frightful horrors in their eyes.

Then there came a revulsion of feeling once more. They spent a second night of grief, now more bitter than the other, for it was mingled with desperation, and had no relief of angry passion. But as the brightness of morning came and strung their nerves to better tension, there came with it also hope. They would make amends! They determined to show courage, though it might be the courage of despair. They would seize on the land and possess it:—perhaps God would be mollified, and would change his purpose. "We have sinned against the Lord," they cried; "we will go up and fight, according to all that the Lord our God commanded us." They took their arms, and rushed onward toward "the hill,"[1]—the adjoining steep ascent to the table land bordering on Canaan. It was a tumultuous throng, without array or discipline, only carried away by the impulse of despair. They thought it could be no worse to perish there by the sword than by slow and certain death in the wilderness. Here there might even be hope; in the wilderness there was none. They turned their backs on the ark and the cloud, which were now disregarded and left behind. Moses hurried after them with an appeal, "Wherefore now do ye transgress the commandment of the Lord?

[1] Deut. i. 41.

But it shall not prosper. Go not up, for the Lord is not among you; that ye be not smitten before your enemies. For the Amalekites and the Canaanites are there before you, and ye shall fall by the sword: because ye are turned away from the Lord, therefore the Lord will not be with you."

As they are rushing on in this wildness of frenzy, we will look at the region soon to be so marked with disaster. Back of the fountains of el-Weibeh the ground ascends by several steps or offsets among desert limestone hills, to a platform about five hundred feet above the Wady Arabah. Across this platform the road passes transversely for about six miles, when it comes to the solitary remains of a small fort, and a ravine, immediately beyond which is the pass *es-Sufah*, "The Rock," which was doubtless "the hill" to which the Israelite host were now hurrying. This pass is at a series of almost precipitous cliffs, and is thus described by Robinson in his journey from el-Weibeh to Beersheba: "The mountain before us forming the next step of the ascent presented a formidable barrier, a naked limestone ridge not less than one thousand feet in height and very steep. Three passes up this mountain were pointed out to us, viz.: that of es-Sufah directly before us; on our right, not far off, another, es-Sufey, and on the left at some distance, the third, called el-Yemen. . . . . The mountain before us we could now see was composed of naked strata of limestone lying obliquely and very irregularly, sometimes, indeed, rising up in convex curves, as if forming an external covering of an arch. . . . We kept on toward the middle pass, es-Sufah, which afforded also the shortest pass. The way up it leads, for a short time, gradually along the edge of the precipitous ravine on the right; and then comes all at once upon the naked surface of the rock, the strata of which lie here at an oblique angle as steep as a man can readily climb. The path, if so it can be called, continues for the rest of the ascent along this bare rock, in a very winding

course. In such places a path had been cut in the rock in former days, the slant of the rock being sometimes leveled and sometimes cut into steps. The appearance is that of a very ancient pass. The whole mountain side presents itself as a vast inclined plane of rock."[1]

Rev. Dr. Olin says, respecting this ascent at es-Sufah: "April 5. We began our journey to-day by an ascent of the very steep and difficult mountain. It cost us hard toiling for one hour and a half. This mountain is composed of limestone formed in regular strata, which at this point dip to the south. The slope is tolerably smooth, being formed of a layer of the rock, which appears, when seen at a distance, as even and regular as a roof of slate or shingles. It is, however so steep that it is barely possible for loaded camels to ascend. We went on foot up the ascent, and I do not remember to have taken a more fatiguing walk."

The encampment of the Israelites was probably in great part on the higher ground west of Kadesh-barnea, and stretched on westwardly till it reached within five or six miles of es-Sufah or "the hill:" and we can imagine the armed throng hurrying confusedly onward,—Moses trying to stop them by his anxious, earnest appeals; the cloud not leading them now, but disregarded; the ark left behind; only one desperate feeling—a resolution to reverse if possible the doom that had just come to them from the Sanctuary, or if they could not do this to perish in battle. We see them rushing forward; and we gaze with horror and deepest grief; for we know that those heights above are covered by their enemies, well aware from their lofty position of the disordered, confused approach, and prepared for resistance. It must be indeed a most unequal fight; for the

[1] Robinson thinks that in consequence of the similarity of names we may here place Zephath (Judges i. 17), and that, in times still antecedent, Hormah was here (Num. xiv. 45; xxi. 3; Deut. i. 44).

people above have only to set the huge rocks plunging down the precipice in order to assure to themselves an easy victory.

During those forty days or more of the encampment at this place, the Canaanites had not been unobservant of the immense hosts on their borders; and while the spies were traversing the land, the spies of their enemies were also busy, and the aggressive purpose of the Israelites could be readily ascertained. In that region to the north and west were also the Amalekites, who in their nomadic habits, were sprinkled over a wide extent of country; and who had now the remembrance of their former defeat at Rephidim to avenge. They were united to the people of Caanan in this defence, and not a better spot could any where be found for it than this pass at es-Sufah, "The rock" or "The hill."

The armed host of the Israelites, had no leader now, neither God nor man. Moses was left behind appealing to them in vain. On they came, fiercely and confusedly: they could not trust God now, for he had forbidden them: they were desperate: they had immense numbers of fighting men, and they might perhaps hope to succeed by a fierce, sudden onset, and by the mere weight of numbers. The threatened doom of extinction in the wilderness was stinging them to madness: better to perish here, in their fulness of strength, they thought, than to drop one by one into graves already dishonored by that doom.—Perhaps hatred of God and fierceness against him stimulated some among those madly-rushing hosts.

The result might be easily foreseen. The men above were fighting for their homes; some of them urged on also by a desire for revenge. Those below felt that God was not with them, but against them. It was only a tumultuous onset, where as they might toil up the rocky precipices their weight of numbers could give them no aid, but would only make the greatness of the carnage more horrible. Rocks

hurled down would make bloody lanes of mangled carcases in the entire descent. If any, by desperate effort, could reach the summit of the one thousand feet, it was only, while spent with the effort, to meet there hosts fresh for the combat. It was an unresisted carnage rather than a fight. After vain efforts where desperation itself could do nothing, the Israelites turned to flee. They were pursued "to Hormah," which we may consider to have been the town below. A rout, a wild panic and an unresisted slaughter made up the scene. The enemy "chased them," says the Scripture, "as bees do;"[1] but seem to have thought it best not to pursue them much beyond Hormah, but to keep by their strong mountain pass.

CHAPTER XLIV.

THE DOOMED HOST.

WHAT a sad history has been this of the Israelites since leaving Egypt! and now to most of them it was to have a still sadder end. Yet how bright and joyous might it all have been! For no people were ever so favored, so protected, and so kindly cared for, and so blest as they. Reading that history, we are filled with wonder at them, we grieve for them, we are puzzled at their obstinacy and perverseness. Yet does not all that history of them and of God's dealing with them, as exhibited in the divine record, *God in history*, have a striking parallel in our own *inner-life* history;—God there with us, we with him? What a bright, joyous history that of every man's inner life, his soul-life, might be: but what is it!

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[1] Deut. i. 44.

Amid such mourning as only the heart utterly overwhelmed can have, the Israelites took their way back from Kadesh, probably by the same Wady Jerâfeh by which they had descended from the wilderness of Paran; and now ascending once more to that wilderness, they began those wanderings which were to continue till nearly half of them would be laid in their graves. Very sadly indeed they went; in addition to the weight of their felt doom, the hearts of many of them were with the corpses now turning into corruption at the place of that fearful carnage. They felt that God's favor had left them, and that they were travelling about under the gloom of his displeasure. Confidence had given way before the mortification of this terrible defeat: instead of their pride in Jehovah's peculiar presence and favor were substituted shame and dejection and grief.

It would have been well for them if this tumult of feeling had resulted in true humiliation of soul, and in a meek asking of God for the return of his favor; but the end was of a contrary kind. They had begun to doubt, and to act on doubts; and these now grew and took possession of them; while spleen and jealousy and hatred came also, and had the rule. As the multitude now reduced but still immense, travelled along, their vexations, instead of causing them to look inwardly and reform, began to point to outward causes, and to lay the blame on others,—of course on Moses and his chief coadjutor, Aaron. The situation of these two men was indeed the most difficult of all possible positions for men to hold. Moses was their leader and lawgiver, yet he had no army to sustain him; had not even that power which comes through appointment by the popular voice; had no authority except that which came from his own greatness of soul, and from the clear and repeated interventions of Jehovah through him. But greatness of soul, amid popular commotions, often makes a man only the more conspicuous mark for envy and malignity, and these Israel-

ites now felt that they were turning away from God, and God from them. In their perverseness they argued, What had the leadership of Moses, and what had God's favor done for them? and their thoughts went to the rotting, unburied corpses of beloved friends on that hill-side, and to a comparison of this wandering in the wilderness with their stationary homes on the green plains of Egypt.

Then ambition came in with its own secret, subtle work, in order to complete the mischief. Aspiring men were plentiful in such a community; and these first whispered in secret, and then they openly said, that Moses and Aaron were assuming more than they were entitled to; were setting themselves too high above others, and ruling too much to the exclusion of others, and finally that all the misfortunes and sufferings had come from their maladministration. It was easy, in such a community, to insinuate such things, and to invent any malicious charges, and to give a false coloring to facts,—where it was all done without an opportunity allowed to explain or to counteract.

All at once mischief broke out into open form: and most formidable indeed it appeared. For the charge was a double one, and it was supported by a cousin of Moses, a Levitical attendant on the Sanctuary, and by two hundred and fifty "princes of the assembly, famous in the congregation, men of renown."

To explain it, we must observe, that originally, priesthood was not confined to any family, but that the head of a family, as Noah, Abraham, Abimelech, Laban, etc., was its priest. In the laws promulgated at Sinai, while the tribe of Levi were all selected for the purposes of the Sanctuary, and were called holy, yet out of the descendants of the three sons of Levi, namely, Gershom, Kohath and Merari, the family of Kohath was particularly chosen: and from this family, by a yet more particular selection, the house of Aaron was taken for the priesthood. Aaron was to be the High Priest.

The present rebellion was headed by Korah, of the family of Kohath, a Levite, but not a priest, though of the family from which the priestly house of Aaron had been selected—a man whose near relationship to Moses gave him prominence. Korah was assisted in this case by Dathan and Abiram and On, descendants from Reuben. The last, however, appears soon to have withdrawn from the cabal. The others, Korah, Dathan and Abiram, followed by the two hundred and fifty princes, came forward in a parade of their numbers and position,—for it was now to be an open and a public rebellion, and all the people were, if possible, to be publicly committed, and were looking on. They came with a cry flattering to the community whose sentiments they wished to enlist in the insolence of their address made to Moses and Aaron: "Ye take too much upon you, seeing all the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the Lord?"

Only one answer could be given by Moses,—that of an humble appeal to God:—he fell on his face in this sorrowful and silent appeal. Then he rose and stood before them, very sorrowful yet, but now strong in heart.

"Even to-morrow," he said, "the Lord will show who are his, and who is holy; and will cause him to come near unto him; even him whom he hath chosen will he cause to come near unto him." And he then directed them to come on the morrow—for he wished to give them a day for reflection,—each one with a censer in his hand and incense and fire in the censer. It was allowable, by the law, only to the priests to offer incense: they were to present themselves thus, in the eyes of the congregation, before God, and to see whether he would accept them as holy men and priests. He called Korah from amidst his supporters, and addressed to him a few words of reproval; and then he summoned also Dathan and Abiram, but these would not

come. Their reply from among their company—loud so that all might hear—was, "We will not come up: is it a small thing that thou hast brought us up out of a land that floweth with milk and honey, to kill us in the wilderness, except thou make thyself altogether a prince over us? Moreover, thou hast not brought us into a land that floweth with milk and honey, or given us inheritance of fields and vineyards: wilt thou put out the eyes of these men? we will not come up."

The morrow was to decide. What thoughts passed through the minds of these two hundred and fifty men, and their principals, it is impossible to say; for they did not shrink from the trial when it came, and they may have become so perverted in judgment by listening to insinuations and by letting their minds take false views of things, as to no longer discriminate between right and wrong. But the case was a most serious one; for the crisis for the whole congregation had come. If these men should prevail,—indeed, if a most decisive and impressive public reproof were not given to such sentiments and such cabals,—the unity of the people would be destroyed; rulers in abundance would spring up and strive for mastery, and inevitable ruin to all would come.

The night was one of universal and great agitations; and at length the morning came. The two hundred and fifty princes with their three principals, presented themselves with their censers; fear and distrust in the minds of some, in some boldness; all spurred on by pride to meet the public challenge, and to brave the result. They were brought into the enclosed court surrounding the Tabernacle; and now in this latter "the glory of the Lord appeared unto all the congregation." The Divine communication directed Moses and Aaron to separate themselves from the rest, "that I may consume them in a moment:" but they fell on their faces in an appeal, "O God, the God of the spirits of

all flesh, shall one man sin, and wilt thou be wroth with all the congregation?" They were directed consequently to get the people outside away from the neighborhood of the homes of the three chief conspirators, who seem by their common bond of union to have pitched their tents together, and to have made there also a false tabernacle for Korah's use. And now, a chill feeling of fear began to spread through all the congregation,—a sentiment of awe from the glory in the Tabernacle,—a dread of some coming retribution, of which this separation was the forerunner,—a horror of expectation; —this general sentiment probably, in spite of themselves, affecting in some degree the three conspirators, who, with their wives and children, stood in the doors of their tents. Alas! in how many instances, even in ordinary times before our own observation, have the wives and children, in God's providences, to suffer with the husband and father, the innocent with the guilty? Moses said, "Hereby, ye shall know that the Lord hath sent me to do all these works; for I have not done them of mine own mind. If these men die the common death of all men, or if they be visited after the visitation of all men, then the Lord hath not sent me. But if the Lord make a new thing, and the earth open her mouth and swallow them up, with all that appertain unto them, and they go down quick into the pit; then ye shall understand that these men have provoked the Lord." There was a parting of the ground, as sometimes in the shaking of an earthquake; the earth opened, and the tents and all in them were swallowed up; "and they perished from among the congregation." The horrified people fled from the vicinity; but a fire from God was swifter, and seizing on the two hundred and fifty guilty princes of the congregation consumed them. Eleazer was directed to gather up the censers which they had been using, and make with them a covering for the altar.

But even after this awful visitation, the evil of these

mischievous men still lurked in the congregation. Such sentiments as they had been inculcating are not eradicated by one exhibition of retributive power, but keep their hold still and rankle; and, indeed, will sometimes only take growth by the stirring up they receive from punishment. The feeling of the people so corrupted was now rather for vengeance on Moses and Aaron than one of conviction and humility. "Ye have killed the people of the Lord," they cried on the morrow, when their first sentiment of horror was succeeded by a mourning for the dead. "Ye have killed the people of the Lord," was repeated on every side; and the cry was raised in the face of Moses and Aaron, till anger among the multitudes and a thirst for vengeance was beginning to drown all other sentiment. This evil, so rife and general, threatened to be worse than the former one.

The "glory of the Lord" again filled the Tabernacle; and the two men were directed, "Get ye up from among this congregation, that I may consume them as in a moment:" but they fell on their faces in entreaty and in appeal for mercy to the offenders. A plague had, however, already broken out among the multitudes and was spreading fast. Moses directed his brother to take a censer and fire from the altar and to run in among the people; and, on the edge of the spreading infection, to "make an atonement for the people." "He stood between the dead and the living;" and as he did so, the plague was stayed. In this short period, however, fourteen thousand seven hundred persons had perished under this divine visitation.

God sometimes writes before the world the record of his retributive power in characters of fire. That record in the Bible is for men to read; and by it we can now look broadly over history and into the minute events of nations, and in them may see his hand. And yet, through all, he is a God of love. We know it; for the love that brought Christ to earth to seek and to save that which was lost, and led him

to die for us, was no new feeling in heaven. But justice and law over the universe also have their place; and most sadly in this Jewish history we are called to contemplate continuously-repeated offences, and consequently continuously-repeated sufferings. But had those people cherished love and lived in love to God, how different the record would have been! Surely God had deserved such love from them.

One other remark we make here, and it is to be in connection with an event which followed closely on the one just recorded. In this divine record, there are events which sometimes appear small in our eyes when we consider them as exercised by a Being so great and supreme as is God. But in effecting good purposes nothing is small, and so with the means which are used for such purposes: if it be a warning, or a remembrancer, or a plain, simple act, or even the suggestion of a common thought, nothing is small which can produce good. All good is great, all that promotes good is great: and without such result there is no greatness at all.

The event now referred to, as seemingly a small matter for the interference of miraculous power, is the budding of Aaron's rod. There was to be a permanent proof of Aaron's right to the High Priesthood, to be preserved in the ark. Each of the tribes was to prepare a rod, and write on it the name of the tribe. Aaron's was to be on that of the tribe of Levi. They were to be laid together in the Tabernacle, and the blossoming of any one rod was to be a sign of the divine choice for the priesthood. It was done: and, on the morrow, "behold, the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds."

The late dreadful visitations, and now after them this proof, seem to have been sufficient to quiet the people, for we have no further record of rebellions: indeed, a feeling of tenderness, with dread, appears to have supervened in

their hearts. When Aaron's rod was exhibited to them, they said, simply, "Behold, we die, we perish, we all perish. Whosoever cometh anything near unto the Tabernacle of the Lord shall die: shall be consumed with dying!"

Consumed with dying! indeed, so it was to be, not immediately, as they intimated it might be at the Tabernacle, but in that wilderness, on which they had entered, and on which they were now encamped. There the congregation remained for nearly thirty-eight years,[1] wandering about, encamping for as long a time as was most expedient; and changing gradually, from the rude, ungovernable multitude that had come out of Egypt, into a more enlightened and more tractable and better organized race of people. The former could not have conquered Canaan; and even if led into full possession without difficulty, would have become speedily disintegrated into minute parts that would have made them an easy prey to their enemies. They were not worthy of such a possession: of the better qualities of the new generation we may see proofs in the future history of this people.

Through these thirty-eight years the manna still came at night, quietly as the dew, and in the morning they found the necessary food lying by their doors. Respecting the supply of water on that wide desert, many surmises have been formed. Some idea respecting a supply, not only of water, but also of food for their flocks, may be, however, suggested, perhaps without any great danger of mistake. The writer of the present book has been twice at Payta in Peru, and in both visits ascended to the wide table-land above the city, stretching from it for many miles back toward the Cordilleras. The ground is level and perfectly bare, and not a green thing is to be seen on it; the surface is a gravelly indurated earth, covered with small, black, rounded

[1] Compare Num. xxxiii. 38 and Deut. i. 3, with Num. i. 1.

pebbles, and the whole stretch of country corresponds as exactly as possible with what the wilderness at et-Tih(Shur)and at Paran in their worst condition are described to be. Not only did it seem to the author as if no vegetation had ever been there, but as if, supposing there had once been, every root and seed must have utterly perished in this baked ground, not visited by any moisture except perhaps a light rain once in five or six years. Yet the inhabitants of Payta said that after a rain the whole surface is in a few days covered with grass. Now, Robinson, when quite out on this great desert, stretching from Wady Arabah to the Mediterranean, one-third of the way from the former, makes this record: "In some spots we found very small tufts of grass springing up among the pebbles, the effect of recent rains. Our guides said that, in those years when there is plenty of rain, grass springs up in this way all over the desert. In such seasons, they said, the Arabs are kings." He had just crossed a wady of which he says, "It is full of shrubs," and he saw a number of similar wadys on this plateau of the desert. We have already quoted his remark about Wady Jerâfeh, that it exhibits traces of a large volume of water in the rainy season: and is full of herbs and shrubs, with many Seyal and Turfe trees." His journey, notwithstanding the rain-fall just noticed, was in a year when the whole country from Sinai to Beersheba was subjected to drought in a very unusual degree. It is impossible to form an exact judgment of that region in the ancient times from what it is now; for the Arabs cut down the acacia trees to turn them into charcoal, and anything that could attract or retain moisture is ruthlessly destroyed. The distinguished traveller, Seetzen, in 1807, crossed et-Tih in a direct road from Hebron to Sinai, that is, across the centre of this desert; and when in the most desolate part, he asked his guide to mention all the neighboring places which he knew. The man named sixty-three in the neighborhood of Madurah,

Petra and Akabah, and twelve more in the Ghor es-Saphia. Of these seventy-five, all except twelve are now abandoned to the desert and have retained nothing but their names. The wadys all over this desert space are so broad and shallow, that water flows slowly in them or scarcely flows at all, and in some of them, even in the dryest weather, it can be obtained by digging down only a few feet.

We need only suppose, then, respecting the Israelites in their wanderings or temporary settlements, that with the manna there might be also a copious supply of moisture, and even in this region they would not only have water, but supplies of esculents from the earth for man and beast. We know that in all those countries vegetation of all kinds flourishes to a remarkable degree, even among the pure sands, whenever moisture can be supplied. It is true that such a supply of rain to the Israelites would be no less a miracle than if springs were to break out at every stopping-place: nor is it the object of these remarks to lessen the character of miraculous supplies to them: admitting the manna, we admit also the nature of any other supply of their wants.

We have in the Bible no record of these thirty-eight years, doubtless because there was nothing in them instructive for the future, as respects our duty toward God or man. The record is silent, but we know that one by one the adult population of these two and a half millions of people dropped away, and that in this desert were their graves. A million or more were buried there, and its wide, dreary, gloomy wastes may be called the fitting memento of such men. Death crept through the crowds of the doomed host; and one after another fell with the mark of God upon him for the bitter sin of the people.

At last all were gone; and the camp might go forward again toward the Promised Land.

When we next open the record made by their leader, it

tells us of grievous sin by himself and Aaron, by which they also were debarred from entering Canaan, though Moses would be allowed to see that country from afar.

CHAPTER XLV.

MOSES AND AARON DOOMED.

IT is pleasant, after such a long period of obscurity hanging over the wanderings of the Israelites, to find them fully in our vision once more, and to be able to follow them clearly thenceforward in their progress toward the Promised Land. We gain our first knowledge of their actual position after thirty-eight years, from Num. xxxiii. 35, where they are stated to have formed an encampment at Ezion-gaber, which we know to have been at the northern end of the Gulf of Akabah. The town or rather castle of Akabah, which, with its surrounding grove of palms, breaks most agreeably on the sight of travellers through that region, in strong contrast with the bareness around, is supposed to mark nearly or quite the place of Elath (Deut. ii. 8); and Ezion-gaber we know to have been also at the head of that gulf, as it became, long subsequently to the time now spoken of, the port where Solomon fitted out his ships (1 Kings ix. 26). Of the latter city, there are at present no remains, unless some small hillocks as of rubbish near Akabah may indicate the spot, but its position as a port must be considered as well defined. Thence the multitudes travelled northward along the great valley of Arabah.

During the whole of this present journey they had Edom immediately on their right; and as they travelled on, their eye was regaled with the great variety, and oftentimes,

the very picturesque beauty, of objects constantly recurring on that side. Edom is a mountainous district about one hundred miles long by twenty in width. As we pass along its edge in the valley of Arabah going northward from the gulf, we observe that it consists at first of porphyritic rocks; but to these very soon succeeds sandstone formation of a very singular kind. This latter, says Olin, "exhibits a beautiful variety of colors as well as of forms. There are some low hills rising between the base of the principal mountains and the plain which are a pure white, when not obscured by débris and sand. The main ridge is composed of yellow, red, white and sometimes purple strata. In one place an extensive perpendicular mass was of beautiful light slate color. Sometimes the summit to the depth of two or three hundred feet, is a delicate red, while the base is white and the intermediate strata alternately white and red. Again, the whole mountain is a deep red or brilliant white. Several masses are a delicate flesh color, a description chiefly applicable to the eastern range north of the point where the granite [porphyry] disappears. . . . The action of the elements has given to many parts of this range something like architectural forms, where the eye is often gratified with the sight of natural forms and colonnades.

Among these singular masses and adjoining the edge of Wady Arabah, is the grand form of Mount Hor, which although making part of the range of Edom, is apparently so detached from everything else as to be a mountain by itself; and near the foot of it, toward the north-east are the remains of that strange city, Petra, lying in a bowl-shaped hollow, in the sides of which temples, dwellings, etc., have been cut into these rainbow-colored rocks. But Petra, though now ancient, is of more recent date than the time of Moses.

These strata bordering the valley rise to the height of about two thousand feet; over them succeed limestone

ridges one thousand feet higher; and finally these latter, at a distance of twenty miles from Wady Arabah, subside eastwardly into a vast table-land, which soon becomes a plain of pure sand stretching far off to the region of the Euphrates.

But it was not only the variety of rainbow-tinted rock that made these mountains of Edom so attractive to the eye; but the valleys cutting into them and often the summits also were green with herbage and trees. "In the valleys," says Robinson, in describing his visit, "were various trees and shrubs, the Seyal, Butm, and the like, also Retem in great quantities,—all very large. On the rocks above we found the juniper tree, Arabic Ar-ar (Lev. xlviii. 6); its berries have the appearance and taste of the common juniper, except that there is more of the aroma of the pine. These trees were ten or fifteen feet in height, and hung upon the rocks even to the summit of the cliffs and needles."

The mountain ranges on the west of this great valley of Arabah are much lower than those in Edom, and are in their full extent utterly bare and sterile; forming a striking contrast with those on the opposite side.

Amid this scenery the Israelites moved northwardly from Ezion-gaber, glad to be once more advancing toward what they might now hope would soon be the conclusion of their journeyings. During thirty-eight years of wandering in the desert, they had in some degree accustomed themselves to the nomadic life, in which energy stagnates, and all places affording supplies of food for man and beast are nearly alike. The doom during that time was upon them, and they felt it. The fearful horrors of that scene of carnage, where the bodies of so many thousands of their boldest men had been left to rot on the hill-side; and the opening of the earth afterward, in the rebellion, to engulf its leaders and two hundred and fifty of their princes; and

the scene of the plague, on the next day, and its fourteen thousand seven hundred victims;—all this was branded on their memory, and had kept them in awe and in quiet obedience. Those of their warriors who had survived that carnage were now dead; all others of the camp, who had brought inveterate habits from Egypt had died also; a new race had come up, less debased, less stolid, less perverse and more readily subject to reason and authority. But still in the camp were many born in Egypt, who still remembered with longings its green plains, the vegetables and fruits and the delicious waters of the Nile; and these presently became the source of mischief again revived in the camp.

The advance along that deep Wady Arabah, shut in on either side by high mountains reflecting the hot sun, was a toilsome one. The whole valley is poorly supplied with water, the present scant springs at el-Weibeh (Kadesh-barnea) being the principal ones in a stretch of one hundred miles. The Israelites, on arriving at this place of their former encampment, came to it palpitating and parched with thirst; and eagerly hurrying to the well-known spot of the fountain, they raised then a great cry of horror, for the fountains, probably owing to an unusual drought, were dry. As on former occasions, the cry was directed against Moses and Aaron: "Why have ye brought us out of Egypt, away from its figs and vines, and pomegranates and corn, into this evil place? Why have ye brought up the congregation of the Lord into this wilderness, that we and our cattle should die there? Would God that we had died when our brothers died before the Lord!"

Moses was now one hundred and twenty years old, Aaron about one hundred and twenty-three. We can imagine them white-haired, their faces worn with care and with the heavy burdens imposed by this tumultuous host, which they had been compelled to bear for so long a time. Especially must

this have been the case with Moses, their leader, although we are informed that "his eye was not dim, nor his natural force abated."[1] Erect, strong, active, as was yet that form under the snowy crown of his old age, his long-continued vexations inflicted by such a rebellious and obstinate race had worn upon him; and now when he saw the old spirit reviving and the old cry raised, it was a possible thing that his patience might utterly give way, and the fretfulness sometimes incident to old age might unconsciously betray itself. Alas for the Israelites if it should be so! For he had often been the only interposing obstacle between them and merited punishment and had raised his pleadings with God for them, even when they were hurling their wrath against himself. Alas, if he should now by impatience or assumption draw upon *himself* the Divine displeasure in a case where his very prominence would render it the more necessary that he should be made an example of God's retribution, exercised for the sake of the general good! Who would then stand between them and the divine punishment upon themselves?

Yet such a case, in regard to both Moses and Aaron, now occurred.

In the midst of this outcry among the people for water, and their regrets about Egypt, and about their not having perished in the wilderness, these two leaders went to the door of the Tabernacle, and there fell on their faces; and the glory of the Lord again filled the place, as it had often done. Moses was directed by the divine authority, "Take the rod and gather thou the assembly together, thou and Aaron thy brother, and speak ye unto the rock before their eyes; and it shall give forth his water, and thou shalt bring forth to them water out of the rock: so thou shalt give the congregation and their beasts drink." The assembly was

[1] Deut. xxxiv. 7.

called, the rod taken, and Moses and Aaron stood before the rock; and now, alas! was a great offence committed on the part of these leaders themselves. They said,

"Hear, now, ye rebels; must we fetch water out of this rock?"

Moses struck the rock and the waters gushed out, in quantities sufficient to afford a continuous supply to man and beast.

But a great mischief had been done. Must WE? The two men had put themselves forward in place of God. They had put themselves prominently as the workers of the miracle. They had not put God before the people, but themselves. The whole tone of their address was peevish, and showed an irritated state of feeling not suited to them, who should have been examples of forbearance and patience to the multitudes. But worst of all, they had arrogated to themselves the place of God. It was a terrible offence, coming from men in their position; and we may believe that immediately afterward the awfulness of the sin flashed upon their convictions, and that they stood abashed and self-condemned. It was a strange sight,—this man, hitherto so blameless and so great, yet now fallen! Moses himself, weak and sinful, and Aaron, also a partaker in the sin!

Might it not be overlooked, for the sake of such long fidelity? No, it could not be. In addition to the fact that it was a sin, and no past fidelity could make it otherwise than sinful, was the other fact that they, and indeed the whole nation, especially at this time, were *living for history*, as well as for the present. The history was to be a transparent one, through which all future time might draw intelligence and see God as the firm ruler over the world.

So an example was made, even of Moses and Aaron, an example adapted to their high position before the people.

"And the Lord spake unto Moses and Aaron, Because ye

believed me not, to sanctify me in the eyes of the children of Israel, *therefore ye shall not bring this congregation into the land which I have given them.*" They also were now doomed men, in a doom similar to that which had come upon most of their countrymen at this place and had scattered their graves so widely over the great wilderness.

They bowed their necks in meekness, though in deepest grief; they saw the offence and the justice of the penalty; they went on in the performance of duty, but from this time forth with a great load upon their hearts. Their fealty to God, however, was not shaken.

This journey to Kadesh, and the halt there seem to have once more alarmed the inhabitants of the country just to the northward, and to have brought on a desultory attack upon the Israelites, some of whom were taken prisoners. But there was no great battle; for if Moses had again intended an invasion on this side, he was diverted from it by finding the people on the alert, and by remembrances of the former difficulties in the pass at es-Sufah. He therefore gave his attention at once to another route.

Almost directly opposite to the spot where travellers agree in placing Kadesh, and only ten miles distant, is the largest of all the openings—Wady Ghuweir—ascending up into the mountains of Edom;[1] and if the Israelites could pass through this, and so around the Dead Sea on the eastward, they might then penetrate at once into the heart of the Promised Land.

Burckhardt, who travelled in a south course through that region of Edom in 1812, thus speaks of Wady Ghuweir. "Proceeding a little further, we came to the high borders of the broad valley called El Ghoeyr (diminutive of el-Ghor).[2] We skirted for about an hour the eastern borders

[1] The reader will do well to refer to the map on p. 316, No. 20.

[2] The great valley of Arabah is called by the Arabs *el-Ghor*, or the depression.

of Wady Ghoeyr, when we descended into the valley, and reached its bottom at the end of three and a half hours, travelling at a slow pace." . . . It is "a large, rocky and uneven basin, considerably lower than the eastern [high] plane, upward of twelve hours across, at its eastern extremity, but narrowing toward the west. It is intersected by numerous wadys of winter torrents, and by three or four valleys, watered by rivulets, which unite below and flow into the ghor. The Ghoeyr is famous for its excellent pasturages, produced by its numerous springs, and it has in consequence become the favorite place of encampment for all the Bedouins [of extensive districts north and south]. . . . The borders of the rivulets are overgrown with Defle, and the shrub Rhetem. The rock is principally calcareous. We ascended on foot through many wadys of winter torrents up the southern mountains of the Ghoeyr; we passed several springs, and at the end of three hours' walk arrived near the summit of the basin of the Ghoeyr."[1] It will be remembered by the reader, that Edom was the region to which Esau retired after the loss of his birth-right; his hunting excursions having made him familiar with this fertile country abounding in game: a tribe of followers had gathered around him, and with their aid he had driven out the former inhabitants, the Horites, and had here securely established himself. The present inhabitants, the Edomites, were descendants from him and his people; and the Israelites were now directed to remember the old relationship, and not to molest these people, though it was desirable to pass through their land.

The Wady Ghuweir, so famous even to this day, was doubtless the route referred to by Moses in a message which he sent now to the king of Edom: "Thus saith thy brother Israel, Thou knowest all the travail that hath befallen us.

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[1] "Travels in Syria and the Holy Land."

How our forefathers went down into Egypt, and we have dwelt in Egypt for a long time; and the Egyptians vexed us and our fathers: and when we cried unto the Lord he heard our voice, and sent an angel and hath brought us forth out of Egypt; and, behold, we are in Kadesh, a city in the uttermost of thy border: let us pass, I pray thee, through thy country: we will not pass through the fields, or through the vineyards, neither will we drink of the water of the wells: we will go by the king's highway, we will not turn to the right hand, nor to the left, until we have passed thy borders."

To this friendly and courteous message a curt refusal was returned:

"Thou shalt not pass by me, lest I come out against thee with the sword."

Another message was sent to their king, and an appeal with it, and a promise as strong as could be made:

"We will go by the highway: and if I and my cattle drink of thy water, then I will pay for it: I will only, without doing anything else, go through on my feet."

"Thou shalt not go through," was the reply. More than this, vast armed hordes of the Edomites were now out guarding the difficult passes along the way.

It was, indeed, a dilemma. The direct effort made on the left up toward Hebron had been most disastrous as already described; the high road on their right was full of armed men, and the Israelites were forbidden to use violence; the Dead Sea shut up their way on the north;—they turned of necessity and with much sadness down toward the south, along that wide, sterile, oven-like Wady Arabah, where, as they went, the hot sun was reflected from rocks on either side, as well as from the scorched sands at their feet. Their feelings were even more gloomy than any of the scenery around.

CHAPTER XLVI.

AARON'S DEATH.

The Summit of Mount Hor, seen from the southeast.

Mount Hor, twenty-five miles distant from Kadesh in a southeasterly direction, is a very conspicuous object as seen from that place. The mountain range of Edom, to which this belongs, has been noticed in this work as rising from the eastern edge of Wady Arabah by successive offsets, which finally attain a great elevation; but Mount Hor rises at once among the lower ranges, and thus stands prominently out, distinct and isolated; its highest portions four thousand feet above Arabah and four thousand eight hundred above the level of the sea.

It presents, at a distance, the appearance of a cone irregularly truncated, having for the summits three ragged

peaks, of which that on the north is the highest. On ascending it, however, one of these peaks is found to be rounded off; and between it and the adjoining peak is a small plain with a cypress tree, forming quite a contrast to the ruggedness and utter desolation immediately around. Bartlett describes even the rounded part as having a very narrow area, and says that, from it "the eye plunges down along a range of ribs of the mountain into a maze of fathomless defiles," which wind about it and circle from the main range into the Wady Arabah. The view is very extensive, taking in this wady, part of the Dead Sea, and an immense extent of the desert on the west, and is dreary in the extreme.

On the summit of that mountain was to be the place of Aaron's death and burial. Overlooking as it does that vast, gloomy desert, the cemetery of the doomed portion of the hosts of Israel, it was a fitting spot for the grave of their first High Priest, also the last doomed. It yet remains in the same utter solitude, the striking graveyard-monument for them and for him.

Miriam, the sister, had died and been buried at Kadesh, at an age, it is supposed, of about one hundred and thirty years. That place, called by Moses *Meribah*, "Contention," was to him one of many bitter remembrances: and now, as with the multitudes he travelled southward from it, came a trial, the severest that, next to the loss of God's favor, could be inflicted on the aged man. He knew that Aaron, as well as himself, was not to enter the Promised Land; but he might have hoped to have the companionship of this brother to the last; to stand with him near the banks of the Jordan, and with him to gaze at the fair inheritance of their posterity. But it was not to be. He was here to part with this brother. As we grow old we cling with greater and greater fondness to the friends of our early days. But they drop from us one by one, and we are at last left alone. So

many have gone that the graveyard is not solitary to us, but the world is.

Eighteen miles from Kadesh southwardly we come opposite to Mount Hor; from this, an ascent of eight miles over the rugged acclivities conducts to the summit of the mountain. When the Israelites came in front of it Moses had the admonition that he was now to lose his brother. "Take Aaron"—thus was the divine communication—"and Eleazar his son, and bring them up into Mount Hor; and strip Aaron of his garments, and put them upon Eleazar his son; and Aaron shall be gathered unto his people, and shall die there."

The two very aged men and the younger one climbed the mountain together. It has along its sides many steep acclivities, and they toiled up them slowly, for there was no need for haste:—why should they hasten, the two attached brothers, who were so soon to have the last parting that men have on earth? As they went upward, and stopped often to rest, and to hold communion so precious to them now, their eyes wandered over a wide space,—the vast desert to the west extending till all was lost to their dimmed sight, the great sandy Arabah below them peopled over now with the multitudes of their countrymen, the mountain chains of Edom and the way leading to the Promised Land. Somewhere in all this wide scene was to be the course to Canaan, though where they could not tell; for the cloud by day was still to be the unquestioned leader and the fire by night. They did not stop to conjecture, for they knew that God would lead aright; but often, as they toiled up, or hand in hand they rested, their eyes sought each other's face and dwelt on the features which had, for so many years and through so many trials, beamed each on the other with deep affection. And truly noble faces they must have been, even in this extreme old age; for that exterior had habitually shown the expression of great thoughts, vast and noble purposes, and loving

affections. These two men had stood in the especial presence of God, feeling him to be there; and such a Presence produces expansion and grandeur of soul to the utmost limit of capacity in any earthly being.

But there must now be a parting. After they had arrived at the summit, Aaron was divested of the garments of his office of High Priest, Eleazar was clothed in them, and by this act became his successor by the divine appointment.

The congregation below, in whose sight they had gone up, saw, after a while, only Moses and Eleazar descend. Aaron had "died there in the top of the mount," and doubtless had been buried by the hands of the brother and son.[1] He died; but how has his living soul spoken in that history through all subsequent time! What a great life is a life which can leave behind such a testimony as his!

The congregation mourned for him thirty days. The mourning doubtless was sincere as well as general; yet among the people were the alleviations from family affections and friendships and the communion in many pleasant associations: what was their mourning compared with that of the solitary, desolate, bereaved old man! He turned and clung now even closer than before to God, and he had comfort.

Seventy miles south of Mount Hor is the head of the eastern gulf of the Red Sea; and to this place the Israelites were now conducted along that hot valley of Arabah, the pillar of cloud still leading the way. They had begun to

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[1] The Mohammedan possessors of this country consider Hor a sacred mountain and make pilgrimages to it. On the rounded summit, as presented in this picture, is a small square building, such as they erect over the tombs of their saints. Beneath this is a subterranean chamber, whether artificial or a natural grotto it is not easy to say, as it is thickly coated with whitewash, and visitors to the spot are watched with a jealousy which will not admit of close inspection. Burckhardt was not allowed to reach the summit, and Robinson and his party were equally unsuccessful.

loathe the manna, though it was a healthy food and had at first been palatable. Its sameness, continued through so many years had become irksome, and the unceasing regularity with which it had been presented to them like that of the sunlight, had detracted from its miraculous character and made it seem as regular a part of the creation as the sun itself. To many of them, indeed, no other method of procuring bread had ever been known. Instead of gratitude to God for such a constant miracle in their favor, therefore was now supervened a feeling of dissatisfaction that there was not more variety, or that the supply was not of a different kind. The feeling had been aided by a sight of the tantalizing green spots among the mountains of Edom in front of which their journey from Kadesh had been, but which they had not been allowed to reach. The cloud leading them had kept persistently toward the south, along the arid valley, where water was with difficulty obtained. Among those wadys far up at their left there seemed to be abundance and variety. Their impatience at last broke out once more into open complaints, and these were raised against Moses in the old manner: "Wherefore have ye brought us out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? for there is no bread, neither is there any water; and our soul loatheth this light bread." Fed by God's constant bounty, they loathed the food because it was not accommodated to their fanciful taste.

The spot where they were at this time encamped is to this day remarkable for serpents; and Bartlett on his way from el-Ain to it, speaks of the sands in the wady he was following, as "curiously marked with numerous tracks of wild beasts and birds, and the sinuous trail of serpents:" Near the castle of Akabah is also a promontory known as *Ras um Haye*, "Mother of Serpents," indicative of their abundance there. These were now multiplied so as to be a punishment. "Fiery serpents" they are called in Scripture,

perhaps on account of the heat and inflammation from their bite, though the Greek writers speak of a species of serpent with a "burning breath." The Israelites were bitten and many of them were already dead, when the multitudes hastened with cries and entreaties to Moses: "We have sinned, for we have spoken against the Lord and against thee: pray unto the Lord, that he take away the serpents from us." In reply to his supplications to God, he was directed to make a brazen serpent in imitation of these living ones, and to elevate it among the people. He had one cast, and on its being raised in their midst, all who looked upon it were saved from death. Long afterward, the Saviour of the world spoke of this act of healing as emblematical of what was to be effected by himself, "that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish, but have *everlasting* life."

CHAPTER XLVII.

TOWARD THE END.

NEAR the place where they were encamped by Ezion-gaber, there is a wady called Ithm,[1] which winding by Jebel Ithm the most southern point of the mountain-stretch of Edom, ascends to the high plateau of the eastern desert. We have already noticed the region of Edom as about twenty-four miles in width, and as consisting of a succession of hills and then mountains, rising up from the Wady Arabah, till they reach a height of about three thousand feet, when they change into the lofty, sandy plateau which stretches off about three hundred miles in width to the plains

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[1] See Map on p. 316, No. 11.

of the Euphrates and the Persian Gulf. On this plateau the Israelites could advance northwardly without interfering with the Edomites, whose feelings they were commanded to respect. The Edomites it was also said should be afraid of them; and thus, in such a line of journeying, there would be forbearance on either side.

The conducting cloud moved eastwardly from Ezion-gaber, doubtless up the Wady Ithm; and the Israelites, after a two days' journey, found themselves on this high plateau, and eastward of the possessions of the churlish king of Edom. It was to them a pleasant transition from that scorched valley of Arabah, and the scarcely less dreaded deserts on its west; and they might also now look forward toward the end of their journeyings. So they travelled on, day after day, the Edomites keeping a close watch upon them but finding them to be harmless and even friendly; and to the Israelites, any kind intercourse with another nation was indeed a novelty. The buoyancy of our nature returned to them; they began also to have some confidence in their own martial strength,—which was indeed soon to be tried. Though the superhuman cause was unseen by them, the fact was clear to their eyes, that the Edomites, notwithstanding the former churlish defiance, were afraid of them, and were treating them with the respect which such dread produces. Thus, on this high plateau, where the air was pure and cool, and the breezes swept refreshingly about them, their feelings rose up into new strength and gladness, and they travelled on in the free joyousness of the nomadic life. But the aged patriarch himself, now oppressed by the weight of so many years, and with a face on which long cares and vexations from them had ploughed deep marks, and with hair white as new snows on Lebanon, —on him this buoyancy and joyousness and social feeling fell as something apart from himself. He was old and solitary; he felt that it was time for his own end to come, and

he knew that it was not far off. There was one hope to cheer him:—he would then go home to God.

For his people he still had many anxieties. He knew that there were nations before them different from the Edomites, and on whom, indeed, his nation would probably have to make war; and the exhibitions of the military prowess of his own hosts back of Kadesh had not been such as to produce confidence in them. He had confidence in God, but he was still bound to make use of the human means within his power; and he must now be preparing the great force of his fighting men[1] for any danger from hostilities that might be awaiting them. Before them were two nations barring all progress, and both might be expected to be unfriendly; for one of them had the established reputation of an aggressive, warlike people, and the other were a people descended from the old Rephaim race—the race of giants. Among these latter were walled cities of great strength, in which every house indeed might be considered as a castle.

Moses had probably no full and clear knowledge of either of these nations, and yet some reports of their prowess, and of the danger in his front must have reached him and his people, as they were now journeying on toward the north. He knew that God was sufficient for all dangers, but it was a very anxious question whether his people would be true to God? They had so often failed in their allegiance to Jehovah, and so often rebelled, that the leader had altogether lost confidence in them. Consequently, what results were before them now he could not tell. He only looked up and saw the leadership of the cloud, and knew that God's special presence was still with them. Over the wide plain were the multitudes rejoicing in their improved condition of purer and cooler air and wider freedom of motion; they were travelling on, most of them joyous, careless,

[1] 601,730 in number. See Num. xxvi. 51.

thoughtless: he was thoughtful and anxious. The aged man felt now how great was the bereavement incurred in his brother's death.

Thus the hundred miles' extent of Edom was passed by, on its eastern side;[1] and then crossing the upper waters of the brook Zered,[2] now Wady Asha, they had on their left the country of the Moabites. These latter, together with the Ammonites, were descendants of Lot; and the Israelites were also forbidden to do them injury, on account of consanguinity. This small region, only about thirty miles on each side, belonged to the Moabites; but their relatives, the Ammonites, probably a nomadic race scattered about wherever they could find pasturage, appeared to consider it also as their home. Both are sometimes spoken of under the same name; and both were now presently united in an intended mischief upon the Israelites. The Ammonites, when alone, showed themselves to be a set of fierce and bloody marauders.[3] This region was also passed without any molestation given or received, the churlish inhabitants keeping aloof,[4] though closely watching the Israelites.

The small territory of Moab was bounded on the north by the river Arnon, now *Modjeb*, which, after passing for some distance along its eastern side, sweeps round to the west, and through a deep cleft enters the Dead Sea; thus it made a strongly-marked dividing line between the Moabites, and their dangerous, aggressive neighbors, the Amorites on the north. The physical geography of the whole

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[1] See Judges xi. 18.

[2] Deut. ii. 13; Num. xxi. 12. This brook now separates two districts, *Kerek*, on the north, and *Djebal* on the south. The stream is now also called *Kerahy*, doubtless after its ancient name. Burckhardt says it runs in a deep and narrow bed of rocks, the banks overgrown with Defle trees. The country adjoining the place where he crossed it, was fertile, and abounding in fruits.

[3] 1 Sam. xi. 2; Amos ii. 1.

[4] Deut. xxiii. 4.

of that country, and the names of cities or ruins still bearing the same names as in the days of Moses, seem to carry us back and place us among the very times of this journey of the Israelites. Burckhardt, in travelling through this region, was shown two miles north of the Arnon the ruins of Diban (Dibon, Num. xxi. 30; xxxii. 34): on the northern edge of the precipice leading down to the river, he saw Araayr (Aroer, Num. xxxii. 34), and he had passed, a little further north, the ruins of Hesban, the capital city, Heshbon, of the Amorites, where extensive remains of houses and deep wells cut in the rock, and a large reservoir, still bear witness to the former great importance of this place. Of the Arnon, he says, "The view which the Modjeb presents is very striking; from the bottom where the river runs through a narrow stripe of verdant level about forty yards across, the steep and barren banks arise to a great height, covered with immense blocks of stone which have rolled down from the upper strata, so that when viewed from above, the valley looks like a deep chasm formed by some tremendous convulsion of the earth, into which there seems no possibility of descending to the bottom; the distance from the edge of one precipice to that of the opposite one is about two miles in a straight line. There are three fords across the Modjeb. I have never felt such suffocating heat as I experienced in this valley from the concentrated rays of the sun, and their reflection from the rocks. We were thirty-five minutes in reaching the bottom."

Across this deep chasm the Moabites, on its southern and western sides, watched the great multitudes of the Israelites as they now passed along, and across it they afterward secretly stole in their efforts to do fatal mischief to these strangers, their relatives.

The latter, passing by the Arnon, came immediately at the north of it in contact with the Amorites. Here they could no longer make a circuit around; for their course to the

Promised Land lay directly through the territory of these people. They could have little hope of being allowed an easy transit through this region; for the Amorites were themselves a nation of aggressors, accustomed to the use of arms, were a conquering people, and had lately come into the possession of this territory.[1] They would consequently have the jealousy of new possessors, and would look with double suspicion upon the Israelites, whom they must consider to be a nation of invaders. The Amorites had originally occupied the hilly country about Hebron, where they were among the earliest settlers:[2] but increasing in numbers and attracted by the rich lands east of the Jordan, they had crossed that stream and made war upon the Moabites, whose territory at that time extended beyond the Arnon on the north, as far even as the Jabbok and the mountains of Gilead. These occupants were driven back behind the narrow limits south of the Arnon, and the invaders under Sihon their king had full and quiet possession of the conquered country. In this condition the Israelites found them. It was necessary to pass through their territory in order to reach the Jordan. Heshbon, their capital, was about twenty miles north of the Arnon and fifteen eastward from the Jordan, and was built on a hill commanding a view over this high table-land.

The Israelites paused. In the migratory habits of nomads, their company is sometimes scattered for many miles over hill and plain, but their scouts always give quick warning of danger, and they are soon gathered into a small compass and prepared for a defence. There was no need of scouts here or of haste in putting themselves in a defensive attitude, for all had known that there was probably danger before them, and that blood might soon be shed.

Moses sent a respectful and very peaceable message to

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[1] See Num. xxi. 26–30.

[2] Gen. x. 16.

Sihon at his capital. "Let me pass through thy land: we will not turn into the fields, or into the vineyards; we will not drink of the waters of the well: but we will go along by the king's highway, until we will be past thy borders." The answer was a stiff negative; and this negative was supported by a marshalling of all the forces of the Amorite king, men inured to battle and accustomed to victory. God came to the help of the Israelites. They were encamped just south of a small easterly branch of the Arnon, still beyond the Amorite territory; but the injunction came to Moses, "Rise ye up, take your journey, and pass over the river Arnon: behold I have given into thy hand, Sihon the Amorite, king of Heshbon, and his land: begin to possess it, and contend with him in battle. This day will I begin to put the dread of thee and the fear of thee upon the nations that are under the whole heaven, who shall hear report of thee, and shall tremble, and be in anguish because of thee."

A battle ensued, and the Israelites were victorious. They immediately followed up their victory with a conquest of all the land from the Arnon up northwardly to the mountains of Gilead and to the river Jabbok: in the heat of passion, as they spread over the country beating down all resistance, they were themselves carried into excesses, for neither age nor sex was spared. They ended with gaining full possession of the country of the Amorites.

CHAPTER XLVIII.

A VERY SINGULAR COUNTRY.

BUT before these armed hosts of Israel was now a country which might well bring them to a sudden stand, and to a questioning of their hearts respecting their faith in God as a helper. For clearly no other help could be of any avail to men so unprepared as they were in military appliances for the species of warfare now seemingly before them.

Their conquest of the Amorites gave them possession of a region extending northwardly to the river Jabbok, which empties into the Jordan about midway between the Lake of Galilee and the Dead Sea. Beyond that was the kingdom of Bashan; and we have the means, from recent examinations, of knowing what was the kingdom of Bashan in those times. Present observations seem to carry us personally back to just that period, and to place this country before us with its houses and cities and walled strongholds, exactly as they were then. As the buildings were in the days of Moses, just so we see them presented now;—the dwelling-houses standing as they were then, the cities as they were then, only now all are deserted, solitary and silent.

No one can visit that country without being filled with astonishment at the perfect preservation of all the houses, and also at the utter solitude among them—great cities now just as they were three thousand years ago, except that they have not an inhabitant among them. It is more like a place of enchantment than a reality. Streets are perfect, houses are perfect; they look as if they might have been great hives of human beings only yesterday, so complete is everything; but all living forms have vanished,

leaving the structures alone to tell of generations buried long ago; and these structures so solid that they look as if they might have been erected previous to the Flood. Indeed, we are there in contact with an antiquity oppressive by its vastness of extent, and by the questions which it starts without helping us to an answer. The traveller walks along the streets and into the houses or across the public squares, all so full of meaning respecting former active, busy scenes: the echo of his foot-fall is all he hears, and he is startled by the sound: his own shadow affrights him in the utter solitude: he is alarmed, at last, at the universal death which has crept over the land, and which seems as if, by its absorbing power, it might seize also upon himself. There is a sense of relief when he gets away, and yet he is drawn back to it as by a kind of enchantment.

There are a hundred *Pompeiis* here in a small compass of country; not buried cities preserved because entombed, but cities for many ages open to the sun and rains, yet all still fresh and perfect, and with a country of richest soil around them: yet all is deserted; all seems dead.

The secret of this perfect preservation is in the material used in building and the mode of building, the former being indestructible, and the latter being such as to make a house, although a regularly built and convenient structure, be also like a hill of rock. The former is the black basalt of the country, as hard as iron, and even more durable; it is the only substance used about the buildings, which are thus great masses of stone,—the roofs, the doors and gates all of stone. Only the bars inside of these latter have perished, but the morticed apertures for them are as fresh as if made but yesterday. The doors stand yet in their places, the floors and roofs are whole and sound; and a stranger has only to go in and swing to the door, and he is in a rock-castle, safe from any outward assaults by man, secure also from the weather, and in a home all his own. There are

many thousands of such houses in cities and country; all of them empty and deserted.

One of these houses, a specimen of the ordinary kind, is described by Mr. Porter, a late traveller in that region. It was the first one he entered, and was in Burak, on the edge of this singular country. He describes it as having walls four feet in thickness, composed of large blocks of squared stones put together without cement; the roof of regularly formed stones eighteen feet long, six inches in thickness and eighteen in breadth, their ends resting on other stones which projected about a foot beyond the walls on the inside, so as to form a cornice. The door of entrance was four and a half feet high, four feet wide and eighteen inches thick; these doors are of stone, and made to move on pivots which are projecting parts of the door itself, and work in sockets in the lintels and thresholds, as do all the modern doors and gates in Syria. Sometimes the doors are as much as nine feet in height, and many of them are ornamented with figures of scrollwork cut in relief on their faces. In this house at Burak, the first apartment was twenty feet by twelve, and ten feet in height. From it, a low door opened into another room behind it, of the same dimensions and character; and from this a larger door admitted to a third, to which was a descent by a flight of stone stairs. This last was a spacious hall equal in breadth to the other two, and about twenty-five feet long by twenty in height: the stone door so large that "a camel could go out and in with ease." "Such," he says, "is a specimen of the houses in Burak, and such a fair specimen of all the houses throughout nearly the whole of the Haurán. Some of them are larger, with spacious courts in the interior, into which the chambers open; others again are small and plain; but all are *massive* and extremely *simple* in their plan, thus denoting high antiquity." Some of the doors and gates are double; inside

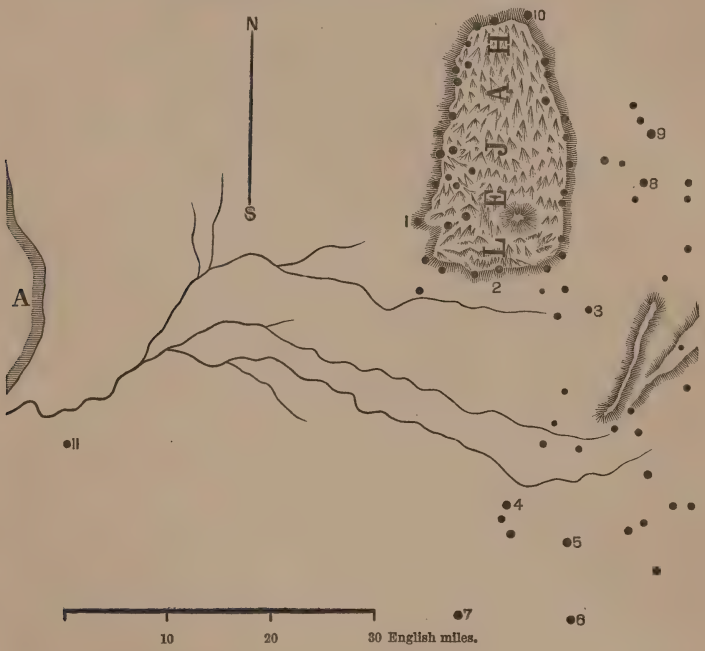
of all are large sockets in the walls for the heavy bars by which they were secured.

This large region of country, now called *The Haurán*,— in the time of Moses, *Bashan*, lying between the Jabbok and Damascus on the north and south, and between the Sea of Galilee and the great desert on the east, has long been known to be one of very great interest, but also on account of the wild Arab tribes claiming it and at enmity with each other, so dangerous that few modern travellers have dared to attempt to enter it. Burckhardt explored some portions of it in disguise: Buckingham saw a small part of it in 1816; Mr. Porter in 1855, under the protection of some powerful sheikhs, explored it more largely, but at last he and his party were set upon at the ancient capital Edhra, and barely escaped with their lives. A few years afterward Mr. Cyril Graham, well armed and strongly protected made a wider journey and came back unhurt, having penetrated defiantly even to the centre of the stronghold of the country, the Lejah, the Argob of ancient times. The half-savage tribes of this desert scowled on him and flashed fury from their eyes, but hung back before his boldness and circumspection and the strength of his escort.

All these travellers have been struck with the extreme antiquity evident in those stone houses, and attribute them to the very earliest times. The Romans, it is true, had possession of the country (for this was the region called Gaulanitis, Auranitis, etc., of our Saviour's time); and those universal conquerors have left numerous proofs of their dominion, still to be seen in the columns and inscriptions in these cities; but the stone houses referred to are of a different type of architecture, and evidently long anterior to that of the Romans, and with a simplicity and massiveness never seen in the structures of that comparatively modern people. All travellers give them an age of at least three thousand years.

Therefore in speaking of these remains now evident to our eyes, in the Haurán, we can safely go beyond the Romans, and can consider them as belonging to the Bible

Map of a portion of the Hauran, anciently Bashan.
(*Compiled from Porter's and Graham's Maps.*)



A. Part of the Lake of Galilee.
1. Edhra, the Edrei of the time of Moses.
2. Kuratha=Coreathe of those ancient times.
3. Kunawat=Kenath.
4. Buzrah=Bozrah.
5. Kureiyah=Kerioth.
6. Sulkhad=Salkah.
7. Um-el-Gemal, probably Beth-gamul.
8. Shuka=Saccaia.
9. Bathanyeh=Batanea.
10. Burak.
11. Gadara.

The river is the Hieromax. Fifty miles east of the Lejah is a similar spot called *es-Safah*, examined by Graham.

account of the times of Moses, when Og, king of Bashan, had there "threescore cities" "fenced with high walls, gates and bars; besides unwalled towns a great many."

That scriptural account of possessions in those days, in a region so comparatively small, might in the minds of persons disposed to doubt, give rise to much skepticism; for those times were so very remote, and walled cities were so rare, and this region was so incompetent apparently to support such populations: but, strange as it may all seem, we have here the proof before us in that very strange land. Mr. Porter says, speaking of such startling accounts in the Bible history, "[In former times,] I had myself turned to my atlas where I found the whole of Bashan delineated and not larger than an ordinary English county. I was surprised, and though my faith in the Divine Record was not shaken, yet I thought some strange statistical mystery hung over the passage. That one city, nurtured by the commerce of a mighty empire, might grow till its people could be numbered by millions, I could well believe,—and that two or even three might spring up in favored spots, clustered together, I could also believe. But that *sixty walled cities*, besides unwalled towns a great many, should be found in such a remote age, far from the sea, with no rivers and little commerce, appeared quite inexplicable. Inexplicable and mysterious though it appeared, it was strictly true. On the spot, and with my own eyes, I had now verified it. Lists of *more than* one hundred named cities and villages in these mountains [Jebel Haurán] alone I had tested and found correct, though not complete. More than thirty of these I had myself either visited or observed so as to fix their position on the map. Of the high antiquity of these ruins scarcely a doubt can be entertained, and the extent of the more important among them has already been estimated. Here, then, we have a remarkable record more than three thousand years old, containing incidental statements and

statistics which few would be induced to receive on trust and not a few to cast aside as glaring absurdities, and yet which *close examination shows to be minutely correct.*"[1]

Among those visited by him were,

Bathanyeh, the ancient Batanea.

Sulkhad (Salchah, Josh. xiii. 11; Deut. iii. 10; Josh. xii. 5), two to three miles in circumference. Here, "on the plain extending from the south to the east," he says, "I counted fourteen towns or large villages, none of them more than twelve miles distant, and almost all of them, as far as I could see by the aid of the telescope, still habitable like Sulkhad, but completely deserted."

Kureiyeth (Kerioth, Jer. xlviii. 23, 24; Amos ii. 2), same size as Sulkhad.

Busrah (Bozrah, Gen. xxxvi. 33; Isa. xxxiv. 6; lxiii. 1; Jer. xlix. 13), one and a quarter by one mile in extent.

Suweideh, four miles in circuit.

Kunawat (Kenath, Num. xxxii. 42), one mile, by half a mile.

Shubhka, two miles in circuit.

Graham went further than Porter, and saw more, and yet he had to leave much of the country unexplored. Among the places visited by him was Um el Jemal, "an enormous city," probably Beth-gamul of Scripture.[2] "This," he says, "is perhaps amongst the most perfect of the old cities that I saw. It is surrounded by a high wall, forming a rectangle, which seems to enclose as much space as the walls of the modern Jerusalem. . . . The houses are some of them very large, consisting usually of three rooms on the ground floor and two on the first story, the stairs being formed of large stones, built into the house walls, and leading up outside; sometimes there were folding doors, and some of them were highly ornamented." . . . "Taking my rifle with me, I

[1] "Five Years in Damascus."

[2] Jer. lxviii. 23.

wandered about quite alone in the old streets of the town, entered one by one the old houses, went up stairs, looked into the rooms, and, in short, made a careful survey of the whole place; but so perfect was every street, every house, every room, that I could almost have fancied, as I was wandering alone in this city of the dead—seeing all perfect, and yet not hearing a sound—that I had come upon one of those enchanted places that one reads of in the 'Arabian Nights,' where the population of a whole city had been petrified for a century." He says again,

"Og, we are told, was of the remnant of the Rephaim, and that he was indeed a giant the length of his bedstead shows. We are told his cities were cities of stone, with high walls, bars and gates; these are the cities which the Israelites took from him; these are the cities which, in later times, the Romans occupied and adorned, and these are the very cities which still are standing, and bearing testimony to the truth of God's word.

"Suppose, for a moment, that no one had ever yet travelled in the Haurán, on reading the different passages in the Old Testament which refer to that country, should we not, when we read the account of such prodigious numbers of stone cities, have expected to find at least some remnant of them now? And when we read in Deut. iii. of 'threescore walled towns, and unwalled towns a great number,' and we see how small a space Og's kingdom occupies on the map, we might almost feel tempted, as many have been, to think that some mistake with regard to the numbers of these places had crept into the text. But when we go to the very country, and find one after another great stone cities, walled and unwalled, with stone gates, and so crowded together that it becomes a matter of wonder how all the people could have lived in so small a tract of country; when we see houses built of such huge and massive stones, that no force that could ever have been brought against

them in that country would have been sufficient to batter them down; when we find rooms in these houses so large and so lofty that many of them would be considered fine rooms in a large house in Europe; and lastly, when we find some of these towns bearing the very names that cities in that country bore before the Israelites came out of Egypt, I think we cannot help feeling the strongest conviction that we have before us the cities of the giant Rephaim, the cities of the land of Moab. These cities have become gradually deserted, as the Arabs of the desert have increased in number, and now south and east of Sulkhad not one of these many towns is inhabited. . . .

"I am now more than ever convinced that among the evidences of the truth of Scripture, there are few stronger than those—undesigned—coincidences which arise out of the examination of the topography. Before the present century little was known of these countries; but now, each few years, some researches bring to light more and more facts connected with the early history of the places with which we are so much concerned in Holy Writ. And we may be quite sure that every certain extension of our knowledge in this respect will afford us additional conviction of the scrupulous accuracy of the Holy Scriptures. At the same time, such knowledge is not to be attained without some difficulty and risk, but I think that one may well be justified in incurring these, where there is hope of such important and valuable results being attained."[1]

But, if the whole country of the ancient Bashan was so remarkable, still more so was its central spot, the *Argob* of Scripture, where was the capital of Og, the king. This spot, called now the Lejah, is worthy of a particular description by itself.

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[1] "Explorations in the Desert east of the Haurán and in the ancient land of Bashan, by Cyril C. Graham, Esq., F.R.G.S. &c.," (In Journal of the Royal Geographical Society, vol. xxviii.).

If the reader will suppose himself to have ascended the lofty eminences bordering the Lake of Galilee on the east, he will find that the ground soon forms itself into a plateau or level table-land, extending far before him and giving evidence of the greatest natural fertility. Crossing over this plain eastwardly, for about thirty-five miles, he will come suddenly to a region of some extent, looking as if the earth had opened itself and shot upward huge masses of black volcanic rocks, pitching them together in a very fantastic and irregular manner, mostly crowded, but sometimes with small spaces between. It may be called a volcanic island lifted up and left to rest on this great level, alluvial plain; and no rocky shore of any island is better defined than is the boundary of this mass of black, hard and sharp rocks. This is the *Lejah:* it is an irregular oval in shape, and is about twenty-two miles from north to south, by fourteen in width, or about sixty-seven in circuit. Its general surface is from twenty to thirty feet above the plain, but this surface is covered all over with those jagged, crowded rocks having the appearance that would be presented, says Graham, "if a vast quantity of molten metal were confined in some vessel and its surface violently agitated by some powerful agent, and while in that state the mass were suddenly cooled." Burckhardt describes the rocks as sometimes twenty feet in height, and "cleft asunder so that the whole appear shivered and falling down." Porter remarks, "It is wholly composed of black, basalt rock. The cup-like cavities from which the liquid mass was projected are still seen. There are in many places, deep fissures and yawning gulfs with ragged, broken edges, while in other places are jagged heaps of rock that seem not to have been sufficiently heated to flow, but were forced upward by the mighty agency and then rent and shattered to their centre. The rock is filled with little pits and protuberances like air-bubbles, is hard as flint and emits a sharp, metallic sound

when struck." Here and there occur small patches of grass, and there are a few trees; but, with such slight exceptions, it is only a labyrinth among molten rocks where a stranger is immediately lost, and in which only the Arabs have the clue. From a hill in the centre, three hundred feet in height, the eye wanders over this singular scene, and also discovers several towns within the Lejah, the houses scarcely distinguishable from the masses of rock. Their inhabitants now, as in the time of Josephus (Antiq. xv. 10, § 1), are a savage set of robbers, at war with all the neighboring country. Burckhardt, disguised as a native, ventured into the Lejah; Porter and his companion entered a city on its edge, and were near forfeiting their lives by the act; Graham went in boldly with a large escort well armed, and met everywhere savage looks, but was left unhurt.

On the west side of the Lejah, about half way along its edge, is a projection about two miles long by a mile and a half in width, having the same character as all the rest, of jagged basaltic rocks and defiles; and here at present is the city of Edhra, doubtless on the site of the former Edrei,[1] the capital of Og, the king. Remains of the ancient city still cover a space there of a mile long by two-thirds of a mile in width. Porter and his party ascended to the city by a winding, rugged path on which the horses kept their footing with difficulty; and from the terrace of the sheikh's house he had a view of the wilderness of rocks adjoining. As seen from this spot, the huge masses of masonry forming the houses could scarcely be distinguished from the rough basaltic masses by which they were everywhere surrounded; and he says that houses and rocks were black alike, as if scathed by lightning.

We are now prepared to coincide with the words of the

[1] There is another claimant for this in Dera, ten miles southwest of this on the great plain, but the probabilities are altogether in favor of this one at the Lejah.

distinguished geographer, Carl Ritter, respecting the Haurán, that, "*these buildings remain as eternal witnesses of the conquest of Canaan by Jehovah.*"

The Israelites after their conquest as far north as the Jabbok, saw across that stream the edge of this very populous and powerful country. What could they effect against a people and against cities such as these;—they a pastoral race, scant in even the common appliances for war? When at Kadesh, thirty-eight years previously, their spies had brought them intelligence about walled cities and the giant race in Canaan, they had been thrown into such trepidation as led to a mutiny; but here were before them sixty walled cities, which must now be taken, and the king of that country was remarkable for size even among the giant race. It is, true, that their recent victories over the Amorites were adapted to inspire them with courage, but we can imagine the chill of dread which pervaded the vast Israelite hosts when Moses marshalled his warriors for the crossing of the Jabbok. Even he could not be confident except only in God. The Deity, it was true, was able to give them strength to subdue this people; but how often had the Israelites shrunk from God, how often rebelled against him, and how often, in return, had he left them to be a prey to their enemies! A similar case respecting similar people had already occurred: could Moses trust his countrymen now? If they should fail in this present instance, what an utter horror of defeat and almost of extinction must be before them and him!

The aged man, with one hundred and twenty years upon him, and head white as snows of Hermon close adjoining, yet still vigorous, and looking in hope to God, conducted them across the stream and into Bashan. Their march led them very soon, close by the strong walls of that large city now called Um el Jemal, still one of the most remarkable for its stone houses, and thence by Bozrah, and not far from

Kerioth and Salchah, all of them large walled cities, while in every direction were evidences of a very dense population and of a flourishing country. They could see the inhabitants looking down upon them from the city walls, as they passed one strong place after another; and they might easily perceive how utterly desperate was any effort by their own unassisted power against fortified places like these. Such a populous country, they also could readily conjecture, would be able to produce a large armed force which must be encountered somewhere; for such a land as this would not be yielded unresistingly. With such thoughts as these the Israelite armed hosts followed their aged leader past the cities and towns of these rock-houses, onward toward the north; and then at last they came in sight of that wonderful region, the Lejah—then called Argob,—bristling with its black pinnacled rocks rising above the island-like formation which rested on the wide plain.

On that plain was also soon before them an immense host prepared for battle; for Og and "all his people were there." Along on the edges of that black promontory running out from Argob, where the whole region as far as their sight could reach, was like a natural fortress, spears were seen glittering and from it defiant cries were heard, while below on the open ground, as if scorning to seek such help, and confident of success, the giant king had marshalled his many thousands for the fight.

Og had judiciously chosen the borders of the Lejah for the place of combat. If he were defeated, that labyrinth of rocks, he believed, would be a place of safe retreat; for one man, knowing its recesses is a match for a dozen in a place where a stranger, even if unimpeded, is soon confused and lost. So he had drawn up his army on the edge of his capital at Edrei, and there was awaiting the approach of Moses and his host. The latter host came on with strangely agitated feelings. Their leader probably was calm. His heart had

reason to be quiet in its entire confidence; for however unworthy might be his own people, and however weak he was himself, even now with his doom from such weakness resting upon him, God had just spoken to him and said, respecting this heathen king, "Fear him not: for I have delivered him into thy hand, and all his people and all his land, and thou shalt do to him as thou didst unto Sihon king of the Amorites, which dwelt at Heshbon."

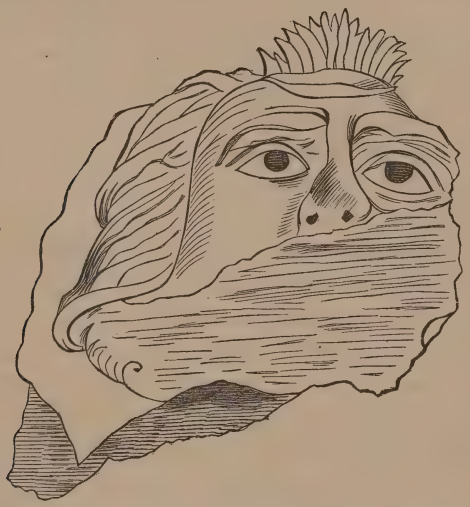
In confidence from such a promise, the heart of Moses might well be calm; and we may believe that the word of assurance had been promulgated widely among his people. But still, as they saw this strange region and this immense armed force, and the form of the giant king towering far above all others, they came on with most agitating emotions, among which, in many hearts, fears doubtless had place. They could trust God's power, but they had learnt to distrust each himself and all others in respect to God.

But the power of God was with them; and against it all armed hosts and walled cities and natural or artificial defences are of no avail. The Israelites triumphed, and soon had possession of the whole country. God only could have given them the supremacy in a region like that. Og was slain in this battle at Edrei. He was the last of the giant race in that country: his bedstead (of iron) was sixteen and a half feet long by seven feet four inches in width.[1]

It is singular that in this wonderful country, we have to this day, united with the proofs of the miraculous power exhibited in subduing it, also evidence cut on those same rocks of the cause of divine interference for the extinction of this people of Bashan. Og, we are informed, "dwelt at Ashteroth in Edrei."[2] In the time of Abraham we read of Ashteroth Karnaim,[3] *Ashteroth of horns*, or *horned Ashteroth*, as a city in this country of the Rephaim or giants. Mr. Porter discovered at Kunawat (Kenath, Num. xxxii.

[1] Deut. iii. 11. [2] Deut. i. 4. [3] Gen. xiv. 5.

42), ten miles from the southern end of the Lejah, a mutilated colossal head, three feet in width and standing out three feet from the block of stone on which it was cut. A copy of his drawing of it is here presented to the reader, and we can have little difficulty in recognizing, by means of the crescent and rays, the representation of the horned Ashteroth.



Head in alto-relievo, believed to be of "Ashteroth Karnaim" (Gen. xiv. 5), recently discovered in the ancient Bashan.

This goddess, as has already been remarked in this work, was the Astarte of the Syrians and the Venus of the Greek mythology; and the most disgusting and demoralizing obscenities were practised in her temples as a part of her worship. We shall have occasion soon to advert again to this subject in connection with Baal and the efforts made to corrupt the Israelites before crossing the Jordan. In addition to the hurtful influence which heathenism possesses in any form, there was in the worship of Baal and Ashteroth the additional wickedness of such gross obscenities, with an effort to excuse or gloss them over by subtleties of reasoning

about the principles of life. It was therefore the most dangerous of all the systems of heathenism, because it had the strongest appeals, and most artful apologies in favor of the worst forms of human depravity. We have thus the reason for the divine decree of extinction, commenced here east of the Jordan, and to be executed still more widely in Canaan.

CHAPTER XLIX.

BALAAM.

IT was with a feeling of intense satisfaction and of gratitude to God that the venerable leader of the Israelites, after the battle of Edrei and the subsequent rapid occupancy of that country, returned now to the general encampment from which he had set out on this expedition. To the whole of these great multitudes the late successes were also a subject of the warmest congratulations, for not only had they come into possession of rich territories, but they had also a most cheering warrant for the future. They were now on the immediate borders of Canaan, only the Jordan separating them from that promised land. They could look over a large extent of that country, and just below them, across that stream, was a great plain, so rich in verdure, and so marked with all the signs of plenty and beauty, that they were anxious to cross over and take immediate possession. Therefore, now that their arms had been so miraculously successful over the warlike Amorites, and the populous and strong region of Bashan, they were confident of easy conquests on the other side of Jordan, and they were watching the cloudy pillar with eagerness, to see it move and lead them on. But as yet it gave no signs of moving; and

although a feverish excitement of expectancy prevailed, they had to be contented for a few more weeks in their present condition, their leader in the mean time arranging for the permanent occupancy of their new possessions. To his people it soon became a time of trial, and through their perversities of a fearful lapse from purity and fidelity to God, and of a frightful retribution. Strange that a nation, so favored, bound so closely to Jehovah by strongest ties, could be so quick to forsake him for Baal and Ashteroth!

The country of the conquered Amorites which they were now occupying, the reader will remember, was just north of the Arnon, and was bordered westwardly by the northern end of the Dead Sea and the lower course of the Jordan. It was a continuation of the high table-land which they had traversed east of Edom, and beyond it on the eastward still lay the great sandy desert stretching to the Euphrates. But the place of their present occupancy on this high plateau was fertile, and had a pleasant variety of grounds, with some prominences or hills rising above the other portions. At its western edge, the ground suddenly subsides toward the Dead Sea and the banks of the Jordan, leaving, however, by the latter, an interval or plain about three miles wide, and extending some distance northwardly along its banks. This was called the "Plain of Shittim," from the numbers of Shittim or Acacia trees, which, fed by the streams from the higher lands, flourished here, and by their shade formed an agreeable retreat. A great many of the Israelites were encamped among these trees, while others occupied the plateau, which was three thousand feet above, and was fanned by breezes in a more healthy atmosphere.

The surface of the Dead Sea as already noticed is thirteen hundred and twelve feet below the level of the Mediterranean: consequently the Jordan flows as in a deep chasm, and this Plain of Shittim on the banks, both from its great depression and the reflections of heat from the steep ascents

adjoining has a genial temperature, even when the weather above is unpleasantly cool. But it is enervating, and the Israelites found it to be so. Directly opposite the plain of Shittim, on the western bank of the river, is the plain of Jericho, about seven by twelve miles in extent, watered by many streams from copious fountains, and blessed with a soil of exuberant fertility. Its position in a basin, as if scooped out in the earth, produces a climate which we have already noticed as proverbially called "Egyptian," and the spot might well remind the younger portion of the Israelites, gazing upon it across the Jordan, of the country by the Nile; for here were palms in such abundance that the city, Jericho, on that plain, was in those days of Moses called "the city of palm trees."[1]

We have thus a view of the physical appearance of the country amid which the Israelites were now situated; but we can have no idea of the polluting influences produced even by the very names of places there, or of transactions and scenes which the mere designations of spots must have soon made familiar to their minds. For the chief god of this region was Baal, and on those heights above the vale of Shittim was the city of Beth-peor, so named after scenes in which the lowest orgies between the two sexes, which in our cities are carefully concealed, were there publicly enacted as a part of the worship of that god.

It was probably during the absence of Moses in Bashan, or if not then, it was immediately afterward, that the Moabites put in practice a singular plan for the discomfiture of Israel. These people had been jealous and keen observers of what was transpiring to the north of that deep glen of the Arnon, which was separating them from the new and formidable invaders. They had, it is true, been in no wise molested, but they were distressed and anxious. The Am-

[1] Deut. xxxiv. 3.

orites had been conquered; the great hordes of Bashan had also yielded, or were yielding, before the mysterious Power which was sustaining the Israelites; a subtle, unseen influence seemed to be at work for these invaders. The Moabites resolved on trying *to set charm against charm, and to have the Israelites cursed.* It was the belief in that country, that sorcerers and prophets had power to curse persons and places, so as to confound all hostile designs, to enervate strength and fill their enemies with fear and dismay.[1]

In this purposed effort the Moabites were joined by the Midianites, to which people it is difficult for us to assign any habitation or definite country. They seem to have been wandering Arabs, like the Arabs of the present day, nomads sometimes, sometimes traders, occasionally occupying permanent habitations,[2] and very rich in flocks and herds. They were the descendants of Abraham by Keturah, and appear to have intermarried with their neighbors from the same original stock, the Ishmaelites.[3] Such nomadic tribes are often very large, and the owners of great movable wealth. Mr. Graham encountered one which he estimated to consist of one hundred and twenty thousand persons, including twenty-five thousand horsemen. They migrate from the Haurán to the Euphrates and to Arabia; and the traveller alluded to, on one occasion wishing to get the assistance of a tribe in his explorations, was disappointed by finding them just ready to start suddenly for the latter distant country. The Midianites and Ammonites appear to have been of this class of movable people; but both drawn by ancient family affinities and by religion to the Moabites, —for all three were worshippers of Baal—and seem to have had their common rallying-point in Moab. All now joined in a common cause against the Israelites, for all

[1] See Gen. ix. 25; Josh. vi. 26.

[2] See Gen. xxxvii. 28; Num. xxxi. 10.

[3] In Jud. viii. 24 both seem to be comprehended under the same name.

thought themselves in danger of losing their pasture-grounds and their old homes. They sent for a man of reputed ability, suited apparently to their present purpose; for they wished to get him *to curse Israel.*

In those old times, as now, there were idiosyncrasies among men that were thought to fit them for special occasions of supposed mysterious influences. When Athens was visited by a great plague B. C. 596, the citizens after trying all kinds of remedies, sent to Crete, for Epimenides, a man of reputation for sanctity and religious rites, and considered by those people as a prophet. He came and had sacrifices offered, and the plague ceased; and it was by his order that altars were erected in that city with the inscription To THE UNKNOWN GOD, because he knew not to what God to attribute the cure. At the time we are now speaking of, a man named Balaam, living near the Euphrates,[1] had a somewhat similar reputation, which reached these three tribes by the Arnon; and he seemed to be the individual adapted to their purpose, not, as in the case of Epimenides, for curing, but for *cursing.* There are roads now directly across that intervening desert,[2] and the whole of that region was familiar to the nomadic Midianites and Moabites. Accordingly, authorized messengers, consisting of "the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian," were despatched to Balaam "with the rewards of divination in their hands." The chief head of this movement was Balak, king of Moab, who had called for Midian with the alarming cry respecting the Israelites, "Now shall this company lick up all that are round about us, as the ox licketh up the grass of the field."

The messengers found Balaam; and whatever the man

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[1] That was the meaning of "the river of the land," Num. xxii. 5.

[2] Mr. Graham saw one now commencing near this (at Salkhad, "Salchah," Deut. iii. 10,) and conducting to Busrah on the Euphrates.

himself may have been, God employed him for his own purposes on this occasion.

Balaam was bidden by the divine interposition not to accompany the messengers: "Thou shalt not curse the people: for they are blessed." The unwelcome news of the man's refusal was carried back to the Moabitish king, who grew still more earnest as he found obstacles rising in his way. He sent another deputation larger than the other and consisting of yet higher princes of the kingdom, and with not only a pressing message, but an offer of very high honors: "Come therefore, I pray thee, curse me this people." The messengers were requested by Balaam, as in the former case, to wait till the next morning: and during the night permission was given him to accede to their wishes, but with the injunction, "The word that I shall say unto thee, that shalt thou do." In the morning, taking the ass on which he was accustomed to ride, and accompanied by two servants he started on the journey; but "the angel of the Lord stood in the way for an adversary against him." The animal seeing the apparition, which was, however, not visible to the master, turned aside, but was brought back to the road; and again in a narrow place, hemmed in by walls, the angel appeared, and the animal trying to avoid the apparition crushed the rider's foot against the wall. Again, in a place where there was no passing by, the angel appeared, —as before in an offensive attitude, and the animal fell to the earth under its master, whose rage, before vented in blows, now rose to an extreme height. The dumb beast was here gifted with speech, and uttered its complaints in words; and the eyes of the master being opened to see his adversary with sword drawn, "he bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face." To the reasonings of the angel he answered, "I have sinned," "now therefore, if it displease thee, I will get me back again." He was bidden to go on,

but warned now again, "Only the word that I shall speak unto thee, that shalt thou speak."

He went, and was met near the Arnon by King Balak, previously informed of his approach, and impatient for an interview and to have the curse pronounced. To the king's salutation and intimations of honors that might be bestowed, he answered, "Lo, I am come unto thee: have I now any power at all to say anything? the word that God putteth in my mouth, that shall I speak."

They went together to one of the sacred places[1] and offered sacrifices: and on the morrow they ascended to "the high places of Baal," where they could overlook the immense assemblages of the Israelites, scattered over the table-land and in the plain of Shittim below. Balaam directed seven altars to be built here, and had caused a bullock and a ram to be offered on each; and then he retired for a while to "an high place," to wait there by himself for the result.

The impatient king stood by the smoking sacrifice, expectant throngs all around gazing on. They were on Baal's high-places, and they hoped here for words of vengeance from their god. Over this wide extent of country, where the Amorites and Bashanites had erected his numerous altars, their enemy had spread, casting down altars and images with many words of reprobation and scorn upon all. The aged chief of these invaders had denounced Baal himself; and his elders and followers had taken up the cry of hatred against this old worship of their god and of Ashteroth;—but now, it was hoped, the time of vengeance would come. Baal would speak out in words of cursing that would effectually counteract the mysterious influences working in favor of those strangers,—the cloudy pillar by day, the fiery pillar by night, resting like a withering power upon the military strength of the inhabitants. Baal would

[1] Kirjath-huzoth, literally, *city of streets.*

declare for himself; the strength of the enemy would be dried up under the direful magic words of their god; and then, to Moabite and Midianite the time of full revenge would come.

With thoughts such as these the people watched by the altar for the return of Balaam, and saw him at last appear and stand by the sacrifices, and with the silence that only such awe can beget, they listened for him to utter the curse. He spoke—

"Balak the king of Moab hath brought me from Aram, out of the mountains of the east, saying, Come, curse me Jacob, and come, defy Israel. How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed? or how shall I defy whom the Lord hath not defied? From the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations. Who can count the dust of Jacob and the number of the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

They were horrified! Balak spoke out the feelings of all in a bitter cry of complaint, and was answered by Balaam sorrowfully and unwillingly, but in words equally incisive as the former: "Must I not take heed to speak that which the Lord hath put in my mouth?"

The king took him, for another effort, to a still higher spot, in hopes that the god would there be more favorable; for the immense multitudes of their enemy would there be more fully seen, and perhaps the god might be thus stimulated to a better response. At the top of an elevation called Pisgah, seven altars were again built, and a bullock and ram offered on each; and the king was again left by the sacrifices, while Balaam retired as before. When he again appeared, the eager question was put to him, "What hath the Lord spoken?" and the reply was horrifying as in the former case: "God is not man, that he should lie, neither

the son of man, that he should repent: hath he said and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken and shall he not make it good? Behold, I have received commandment to bless; and he hath blessed, and I cannot reverse it," and he proceeded with like remarks, declaring, "Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel."

The crushing anguish of the king is seen best in his own words, "Neither curse them at all, nor bless them at all." But again a hope rose in him, though full of fear respecting the result, and mingled with a deep despondency. There was Mount Peor, where was the temple noted most of all for the disgusting scenes of licentiousness in honor of their god; and to this place Balaam was now conducted. Their god, they hoped amid their growing despair, might possibly there give them a favorable response. Here the same number of sacrifices of the same kind were made; but this time Balaam did not withdraw to receive his answer. He believed it to be useless; and so, standing by the altars, he looked abroad over the widely-spread tents of Israel. The company around were afraid now of his speech; were afraid to gaze on his face, lighted up as if by a strange fervor,—on his staring eyes, as if seeing sights not seen by them,—on his changed expression, as if the mystic scenes rising before him in his trance were horrifying to himself. And seeing him they dreaded to hear his words. These were in the same poetic phraseology as before: "Balaam, the son of Peor hath said, and the man whose eyes are open hath said: he hath said which heard the words of God, which saw the vision of the Almighty, falling into a trance, but having his eyes open: How goodly are thy tents, O Jacob, and thy tabernacles, O Israel!" and proceeded in the same strain of prophecy respecting the future of these enemies of Balak. The feelings of the latter had been verging toward an angry explosion, and they now broke out in reproaches, and a

warning, "Now flee thou to thy place," with a hint at the honors which he had intended to bestow. The reply was that the king had been forewarned that Balaam would speak only as God should dictate; and then were added prophecies respecting Moab, and Edom and Amalek and the Kenites, which could leave to Balak or his friends no items of hope.

Balaam had been foiled in his hopes of honor and wealth; he had been made to speak involuntarily words of blessing where he would have been glad to curse; he had himself been filled with chagrin at his three efforts, with altars and sacrifices; and he now retired from it all with as much grief as Balak could feel. But a plan then suggested itself to him, which he thought might succeed. It was truly an execrable one, but in his mortification he was ready for anything. The last place of sacrifice, full of licentious surroundings, perhaps suggested the idea to him: he laid it before the king and it was adopted. It was easy in that country of worshippers of Baal-Peor and Ashteroth to find agents for its execution; to execute it would seem to those people to be a patriotic deed.

The plan was to entice the Israelites away from God, and to draw them over to Baal, by means of the licentious Midianite women. God had interposed for his people here and in Bashan: that cloud and that pillar of fire were visible proofs of his presence: he had turned purposed cursing into blessing: but if a barrier could be interposed *between the Israelites and him;* if they could be brought to worship Baal and Ashteroth, and their protector be changed to an enemy, then these vast hordes of hated strangers would be themselves made the causes of their own defeat and ruin. Revenge so got would be doubly sweet. Balaam suggested his plan[1] and it was adopted: he left for his distant home, but the means were immediately put into execution.

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[1] Num. xxxi. 16.

The Israelites, during all this, were resting unconsciously in their tents, and enjoying the ease and repose of their new encamping-places, on the heights or down in the vale of Shittim among its acacia groves. They had tried their arms against formidable warlike hosts, and had conquered: by their side was the Promised Land spread out before their vision: they believed that they had only to cross the river and it would all be theirs. Their vigilance was relaxed, their souls were becoming enervated by indulgence; the whole country about them was suggestive of licentious thoughts, which found too many answering sensations in their own natures during this ease and idleness. In this state of things they perceived Midianite women coming among them singly or by companies, and respecting them saw no occasion for alarm. Had they been *men* of any nation, no matter what their professions of friendship might have been, the apprehensions of the rulers and especially of Moses would have been excited; but the danger here stole into the camp in such a disguised shape and was so carefully concealed that the mischief was done before it had been suspected by the leader. The arts of these women not only led off the men into crime, but they were insinuating the poison of heathenish belief among the whole congregation of Israel.

Moses waked up, by and by, to a perception of the mighty evil in the camp. He had never been of a suspicious, uncharitable nature, and his attention had lately been divided also by the newly-acquired possessions of his people and directed to measures for holding them in safety. These recent proceedings might therefore very easily escape his scrutiny, especially as the abettors of them would court concealment, and be on their guard against exciting his displeasure. He then might well be horrified, as he was, when the nature and the extent of the wickedness began to be disclosed to him. The plot carried out by these artful,

lascivious women had been successful to such an extent that the abominable scenes in the former worship at Beth-peor, had been reenacted now by his own people, and the sacrifices and feasts to these heathen gods were beginning to be re-established by the Israelites.

The fiery indignation of the leader was in harmony with God's order on the occasion: "Take all the heads of the people, and hang them up before the Lord against the sun [their Baal-god], that the fierce anger of the Lord may be turned away from Israel;" to which was added, "Slay ye every one his men that were joined unto Baal-peor."

It was done: for a sudden revulsion of feeling throughout the camp was greatly aided by a plague which had broken out among them, caused evidently by the divine displeasure. Twenty-four thousand people perished amid its swift ravages: the remainder, pale and trembling,—no one knowing where it would end, and all feeling the justice of the judgment,—hastened to the front of the Tabernacle, and with tears deplored their wickedness. An act of daring outrage, committed insolently, even there before them by one of their nobles, and promptly punished by Phinehas, son of Eleazar, was the last of those scenes in this, the last of the rebellions against God while under the government of Moses. The plague, at this last act, was stayed.

One more deed remained for this aged leader: after that he was to go to his long rest. "Avenge the children of Israel of the Midianites," said the divine order: "afterward shalt thou be gathered unto thy people." We are reading in this Bible narrative a record in which the divine hand is seen, and reasons given for its interference. All transactions among nations are marked by strong visitations of the Almighty Ruler,—nations suddenly subverted, and all, both old and young, perishing,—catastrophes by earthquakes or famines, where all alike die terrible deaths; —we acknowledge them to be by the divine, omnipotent

power, and though we cannot see yet, we recognize the rightfulness of his sway, mysterious to us. In this present record we do see,—still however darkly, as men must ever see when marking the visitations of God, but we see enough in these records, to enable us to believe that, in all others, God's hand rules in righteousness, and for the general welfare."

In this case a thousand men were taken from each of the tribes of Israel and sent against the Midianites. Battles ensued, in which the latter were defeated with great slaughter, and in one of these, Balaam, who had come out to the assistance of his friends, was himself slain. The women and children of the Midianites were taken alive, but some of the former, probably as a warning to all worshippers of Baal-Peor, and against such arts as were practised on the Israelites, were put to death. The immense number of sheep and cattle taken as the results of these battles, shows the nomadic character of this people, who had, however, in certain places, permanent habitations: the latter were destroyed.

CHAPTER L.

DEATH OF MOSES.

"O LORD GOD, thou hast begun to show thy servant thy greatness and thy mighty hand: for what God is there in heaven or on earth that can do according to thy works, and according to thy might? I pray thee let me go over, and see the good land that is beyond Jordan, that goodly mountain, and Lebanon."

— Such was the appeal now of the aged man, as standing

on those heights overlooking the Jordan and the country beyond it, he felt an earnest yearning to set foot on that Promised Land, the end of such long wanderings and of so many trials, and at last so near. He wished also to see his people safely across that stream, to feel himself among them in their new homes, and to witness their possession, if only of a small portion of the country, and but for a few days. Then he would be ready to close his eyes on all the world and to depart for another. It might be that there would also be fighting just beyond the river; for that large walled city of Jericho was confronting them, and that immense garden-like plain would not be readily yielded by its inhabitants. How beautiful that plain was! how inviting, with its groves of feathery palms! its great stretches of intense verdure, its signs of fertility and abundance! Even Moses, himself, as he gazed upon the palm groves, the sight of which carried him back to his young, fresh life in Egypt, may have felt the longings which old associations bring back, and have wished to sit, if only for a few hours, once more in the palm tree shade, with the rustling of the beautiful feathery coronet overhead.

So he prayed: but the prayer was denied. The answer, was:

"Let it suffice thee: speak no more unto me of this matter. Get thee up into the top of Pisgah, and lift up thine eyes westward and northward, and southward and eastward, and behold it with thine eyes. for thou shalt not go over this Jordan." [1]

There is an exactness and a firmness of determination in all God's dealings with the Jews, as shown in this Mosaic record, which is constantly meeting us with striking force as we read. They were God's chosen people; favored and blessed as no other people had ever been; and the picture

[1] Deut. iii. 24–27.

sketched by his own hand of his treatment of them is appropriately beautiful: "As an eagle stirreth up her nest, fluttereth over her young, spreadeth abroad her wings, taketh them, beareth them on her wings, so the Lord alone did lead them:"—and yet, with all this, there is a sternness and unyieldingness in retribution which may very well make us pause and think. If with all his love to his favorite nation, and his tenderness and care, there was this unyieldingness, how can other nations, when transgressing the laws of righteousness, hope to escape? And again, more wonderful far than this peculiar regard to the Israelites, has been Christ's regard which has led him, God himself, to come and die as a ransom for the transgressors. Unfathomable was that love of Jesus; and yet Christ's words, even during this mission when he came to die for us, have a firmness and decision respecting transgressors that equal any thing in the laws or acts spread before us in the Mosaic record. The same lips which declared that he, the Divinity, had come to seek and to save that which was lost; and that he in our nature would suffer for us and be lifted up on the cross that all the world might come unto him; and that God so loved the world as to give his Son to die, said also with emphasis that "Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law till all be fulfilled;" and also drew the scene—far more frightful than any thing sketched by Moses—of the final Judge declaring, "Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels."

God is a being of infinite love and compassion; and he surely was so to the Israelites; yet in the parting address now made by Moses, they were told, "For the Lord thy God is a consuming fire, even a jealous God." Who can wonder that he was a jealous God, when the antagonistic heathenism around was productive of such scenes as we have just been only hinting at, in the temples of Baal and Ashteroth?

As respects the unyieldingness of the judgments that come from God's hand, we must remember that he is the ruler not over a community alone, but over the earth, and still more over the universe of matter and of spirit.

The petition of Moses to be allowed to cross the river with his people was almost pathetic; but his transgression at Kadesh had been open and marked; and the higher and more distinguished the man, the firmer was the decree and the doom.

After the refusal he set himself to work, to make the final organization of the people and arrangements for his separation from them. Reuben and Gad and the half-tribe of Manasseh, who were all peculiarly of a nomadic character and had large flocks and herds, had been captivated by the adaptedness of the region now about them for their interests, and had requested that it might be assigned to them; which had been done, on condition that their soldiers should go over with the rest and assist in any needed warlike demonstrations west of the Jordan. Reuben had the more southern portion, and the other two received the country of Bashan and about Gilead. Individuals (a prince from each tribe, together with Eleazar and Joshua) were designated by the divine authority, for making the allotments across the river, after possession there should have been gained.

Then the feelings of the great leader returned again to the fear that was continually upon him,—that the people would desert God, a fear which their late apostasy had served so much to strengthen. God would then desert them; and in Jehovah, as he knew, was their only hope. He recapitulated before the multitudes what had been done for them by the divine help, making a review, in doing this, of their history since the departure from Egypt. He promised them abundant blessings in the future, if they would be faithful to their heavenly Protector: and the same

spirit of prophecy which dictated his sublime language declared also, if they should be unfaithful, the fearfulness of the scenes awaiting them—where it was stated they would be "an astonishment, a proverb, and a by-word, among all nations whither the Lord shall lead thee. . . . And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other. . . . And among these nations shalt thou find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the Lord shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind. And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee; and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life. In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! for the fear of thy heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see." To us, who can now look back on what was to them the future, how much this prophecy, written three thousand three hundred and eighty years ago, reads like history! He added, "I call heaven and earth to record this day against you, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing: therefore choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live: that thou mayest love the Lord thy God, and that thou mayest obey his voice, and that thou mayest cleave unto him (for he is thy life, and the length of thy days), that thou mayest dwell in the land which the Lord sware unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give them." There seems to run through all these last words, a mournful feeling, as if Moses was too prescient to be quiet under it, as respected the future.

The divine communication now announced to him, "Behold, thy days approach that thou must die," and directed him to call Joshua; and then the two went together into the Tabernacle, where now the pillar of cloud came and "stood over the door." The people were here given into Joshua's

charge. The leadership by the great man, who had done his duty so long and so faithfully, was ended.

"Give ear, O ye heavens, and I will speak; and hear, O earth, the words of my mouth:"—they are among the last words of Moses that we shall hear,—for he was to die on that day—and these were by the divine dictation his farewell hymn before the assembled multitudes. He and Joshua had come out of the Tabernacle, and they stood before the people, the old man and the young man, side by side; and upon them all the eyes of the congregation were fixed. They knew that they were to lose him. He was before them, most venerable in age; his successor was there, a trustworthy man, but far less experienced; and all that soundness of judgment which can arise only from experience would be needed in their near future. How often, in the past, had that aged and now doubly beloved man stood between them and God's vengeance, threatened for their sins, and had warded off the blow! There could be no such intercessor now; and they, so weak and so given to falling! They gazed on that face, so marked with age and care and griefs which they themselves had caused; they noted well the grandeur of expression, now all lighted up by the divine afflatus in his song:—they gazed, and would have kept him among them—would have led him across the river,—have asked his counsel there—and have kept his love still among them.

But they understood that this could not be.

He gave now his blessing to each of the tribes individually; and then included all in one general benediction: "Happy art thou, O Israel: who is like unto thee, O people saved by the Lord, the shield of thy help, and who is the sword of thy excellency? and thine enemies shall be found liars unto thee; and thou shalt tread upon their high places."[1]

[1] Of their false gods.

This last scene appears to have been at the great plain by the Jordan, where he could stand on the lower part of the mountain, and be visible to all below. Then he ascended the mountain, and having reached the heights above, he went alone to the loftiest ridge, Pisgah, and to Nebo, the highest point on that ridge. There he gazed over the very wide scene spread out on every side,—to the Mediterranean, far in the west, to Lebanon and the snowy Hermon on the north, to where, on the south, the landscape faded away into the desert of the long wanderings, and on the east over the table-land of Moab and toward Bashan. Across the Jordan were vast stretches of landscape,—hills and plains intermingled—extending off till all took an indistinct character, except where here and there a mountain peak rose up in greater prominence. Below, flowed the river, winding along in a silvery line, and then discharging itself into the Dead Sea; and upon its banks, spread out invitingly the great green plain of Jericho, with its palm tops waving, as if the breeze and the foliage were inviting the spectator over. But he was not to go.

God was with the aged man on that mountain-top, and there spoke to him words of kindness and assurance. Then came the end:

"So Moses, the servant of the Lord died there in the land of Moab, according to the word of the Lord.

"And he buried him in a valley in the land of Moab, over against Beth-Peor: but no man knoweth of his sepulchre unto this day."

CHAPTER LI.

JORDAN CROSSED.

THE Israelites mourned for their late great leader thirty days, with that sincere and deep sorrow which people feel when they have lost a friend on whom they could safely lean in all trials, and whose sure, true love and sustaining arm cannot be replaced by any one on the earth. They all knew what fulness of reliance could always be placed on him who was now gone; how large and thorough had been his knowledge, how profound his wisdom, how sympathetic his heart, how forbearing and how self-sacrificing he had been in all his acts. They had just seen him go up the mountain, and pass off alone from among them; all else was shrouded in mystery. Sometimes they looked, thinking that he might return possibly in some other form; or that he might on Nebo have even obtained, at the last, a reversal of his doom, and might yet be their leader, if only for a little while: sometimes, in the night or in the day, a sudden appearance of some one at a distance, in the uncertainty of recognition, made them start in hope: sometimes a voice far or near seemed to have his tones, and set their hearts palpitating. But he came not again. Day after day and week after week passed in this mourning, and the mystery was never cleared up. They knew, at last, that God had surely taken their old, tried, sincere friend, and left them alone. Yet not alone; for the cloud still rested over the Tabernacle by day; the pillar of fire still shone by night; and God's special presence was still known to be with them for good, if they would be true to him. They felt the necessity now, more than ever, of keeping close to God.

Joshua—probably during this time of mourning—sent out spies to examine the land which they were so soon to invade. These men had a narrow escape from death in their difficult and dangerous mission; for the inhabitants across the Jordan were keenly apprehensive and on the alert. But the spies finally returned in safety, bringing encouraging intelligence. They said, "Truly the Lord hath delivered into our hands all the land; for even all the inhabitants of the country do faint because of us." It had been declared to them privately in Jericho, "We have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you, when ye came out of Egypt; and what ye did unto the two kings of the Amorites that were on the other side of Jordan, Sihon and Og, whom ye utterly destroyed. And as soon as we heard these things our hearts did melt, neither did there remain any more courage in any man, because of you: for the Lord your God, he is God in heaven above and in earth beneath."

Preparations were therefore now made for crossing the river.

It was evident to all that without the divine aid, the crossing was impossible; for the stream at this spot opposite to them is not fordable, and the fords higher up, practicable at other seasons, could not at that particular time of the year be available. For it was the time of barley harvest, in their spring season, when the melting snows at Hermon send down a flood that raises the stream beyond the fullest capacity of its banks.[1]

The Jordan, after passing through the Lake of Galilee, continues along in a deep hollow, called by the present natives *el-Ghor*, or "The Depression," a name very significant of the chasm-like, sunk region in which it flows. The Lake of Galilee is six hundred and fifty-two feet below the

[1] Josh. iii. 15.

level of the Mediterranean, and the Dead Sea, as already noticed, one thousand three hundred and twelve feet. Between the two is this depression or ghor, five or six miles wide and sunk from one thousand to one thousand two hundred feet below the neighboring country. Then in el-Ghor, running lengthwise in it, is a still lower depression of about fifty feet, having a breadth of four hundred yards: and winding about in this latter is the channel of the river. The stream has an average width of fifty-six yards, with commonly a depth of water from three to five feet, the bottom rocky or sandy according to the flow, and sometimes varied by cataracts. The distance between the Lake of Galilee and Dead Sea is but sixty miles, and the descent being six hundred and sixty feet, there would at all times be a great rush of water, if it were not for the extremely tortuous course of the stream, which is so great as to make its entire length equal to two hundred miles. The immediate bank of the river, at the plain of Jericho, is ordinarily a steep descent of six feet down to the water, and is fringed on either side with a thick growth of willows, tamarisks, oleanders and cane. The width of the Jordan is there narrowed considerably, the depth is ordinarily ten or twelve feet, and the current is at all times rapid.

But at the time for the crossing of the Israelites, the depth was much greater, for the flood was up to the edge of the banks and in places overflowing; and the water was now surging along with correspondent unusual velocity.

Such was the river which the Israelites were at this time contemplating from the vale of Shittim or the heights above, and which they were preparing to cross. Only God could carry them over, and they knew it. He was supreme over all nature; he had led these people already across the Red Sea in safety. Still they might well question their hearts—these multitudes, who had so often murmured against him and showed always such a quickness to rebel.

Would he help them now?—They knew, however, that they had no other helper.

Therefore, when Joshua at the proper time sent directions among them for their action, they yielded a ready obedience; wondering, however, watching, deeply earnest, and with many a querying among themselves,—sometimes also with palpitating hearts and with the shrinkings of natural fear. For it was not easy to look down with other sensations on that swift rush of heaving, discolored water bearing on its bosom the wrecks of things torn from its banks in regions far above: it was a formidable stream to any one, and especially so to the younger portion of the Israelites, who had never beheld a river before. It seemed as if it might be a grave already prepared for the rebellious and wicked among them; and who of their number had come out from these late scenes of Baal-Peor and the Midianite temptations to idolatry, with hearts pure and clean?

So they gazed and felt: but they knew soon that the time for crossing over was arrived; for officers of the host passed among them warning all, by Joshua's directions, to prepare three days' extra supply of food; "for in three days ye shall pass over this Jordan, to go in and possess the land which the Lord your God giveth you to possess it." The manna had continued still to come down at night, in its peculiar quiet mode of giving them sustenance, as it had done for nearly forty years, but their leader probably had prescience that it would cease immediately after their crossing the stream. In addition to it, the rich plains of Moab and Bashan had furnished them with corn; and with this latter they could easily make such preparation of extra provision for three days.

The encampments on the heights and the lower slopes about Shittim were now broken up, and the people were brought down toward the borders of the stream. Directions

were then given, "Sanctify yourselves: for to-morrow the Lord will do great wonders among you."

And so the morrow came, the beginning of the great and eventful day.

Orders were now given for the multitudes to fall back, so as to leave a vacant space of about three-fourths of a mile about the Ark of the Covenant. The ark was ordinarily carried by the Levites who were not of the house of Aaron, but on this occasion it was to be borne by priests.

With this wide space kept open, the people on each little elevation were able to see every movement made with the ark. They gazed with quick-beating hearts and bated breath as they saw the priests take it up, and saw them advancing directly toward the river, the deep, surging stream still rushing impetuously by. They saw them reach the water till the feet of the bearers were dipping into it. Then they saw the current borne back, and they drew a long breath of relief. Quickly a murmur of deep joy and thankfulness spread through those immense hosts. They saw the waters up the stream held and restrained and spreading over the great valley far above; while at its lower part the river retreated also, and the deep bed of the Jordan was laid bare.

The priests bearing the ark descended to the middle of the channel, and stood there; and now the great multitudes were bidden to advance and to cross to the other side. None could doubt God's power there; all had clear assurance now of the fulness and certainty of the heavenly aid, and all advanced cheerfully and confidently to and across the channel. It would take many hours and a long extent of dried-up river[1] for such a large number of people, with their flocks and herds to cross over; but until all were

[1] Both have been estimated—the time at eight hours, and the width of the hosts crossing, with their baggage and cattle, at two miles. See "Palestine Past and Present, by Rev. Henry S. Osborn, A.M."

over and safe on the western side, the channel was still kept dry—the waters being restrained above and below by the power of their Almighty Protector and Guardian.

The ark and the priests bearing it still remained at their first position in the middle of the river-bed. Twelve men, one out of each tribe, who had been previously selected, were now directed to take, each man a stone from the channel and to carry it up to the dry land, to be kept there as a memorial and a subject of teaching to future generations—"That the waters of Jordan were cut off before the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord; when it passed over Jordan, the waters of Jordan were cut off." They were also to set up twelve stones in the middle of the channel, where the priests bearing the ark had stood. When this was done, the priests themselves were directed by Joshua to come up, bringing the ark on their shoulders. They did so, and when their feet reached the brink on this western side, the waters rushed along again, surging and sweeping by as they had previously done.

THEY HAD AT LAST ENTERED THE PROMISED LAND.

Amid the general congratulations of the vast multitudes so full of joy at their safe transit, and amid the words of cheer to each other respecting the future, and the brightness of hope from this new assurance of God's favor,—amid all the scene of great happiness on that western bank, we cannot but turn now to look back over the river, to that high mountain where rest the remains of the recent great leader, left in solitude and an unknown grave. Fitting, however, for his burial was that elevated ground overlooking all Canaan; and fitting was the interment when angels performed the rites for one who, though of earth had received on his face the impress from God's own glory; and fitting was the end of him, who after so many proclamations of God's law for men, left in his death a proof of the stern unyieldingness

of this law exacting its penalty for a single transgression, even from him the most favored of human beings.

Thus he rested in his mysterious burying place. But long afterward he was seen on earth, when for a brief period the veil which obstructs mortal vision was lifted, and heaven's full glory was beheld surrounding Christ on the Mount of Transfiguration, while amid that glory were seen Moses and Elias, drawn from heaven into the presence of their and our Lord. It was all only a short flashing out upon our earth of the supernal brightness, in which Christ's face "did shine as the sun;" but even those few moments have left a beaming light enduring still on our earth, and to last through all future time. The scene was many years ago, but as we now gaze at it through the experience of centuries of results, we are entranced by the vision;—the face all gloriously bright like the sun, and also as glorious in goodness; and near by, the face of the hero-prophet who had perilled life, as Christ was now perilling his, for righteousness' sake; and the face of the great giver of the Law that was to be "our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ." Memory is quick sometimes; and as we gaze, there come sweeping over it now those long scenes of trial in the heart of the lawgiver, and the futility of all effort to make men righteous by obedience; while in Christ we see Love that makes him the great substitute for us in penalties, the great sacrifice, by which we can be saved, while God's eternal Law is kept unsullied in its high place of sacredness and power.

THE END.

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